

Chapter 1

Archaeological Dimension of World Heritage: From Prevention to Social Implications

A. Castillo and M.A. Querol

Abstract This chapter is more than an introduction to the present volume. It is based on the consideration and definition of the archaeological dimension in heritage properties, as well as on a broad concept of Archaeological Heritage, where not only the sites and properties situated underground but also any constructed element of historical character, and of course also cities, which can and should be read archaeologically, are included. This wide reading must be used to provide the sites with an archaeological dimension to make these sites more human, according to the changing meaning of any cultural manifestation of societies.

The selection of articles (chapters) has been made mainly with regard to the high quality of the papers, which were among those presented at the “First International Conference on World Heritage: Archaeology,” held in Menorca in April 2012. They are representative of the main topics discussed during the conference (Architecture, Preventive Archaeology, Social Action, Land Planning, Information Technologies Communication (ITC), Education and Diffusion, and Protection), and most importantly, they show good and interesting examples of the pursuit of Best Practices at the sites.

Keywords World heritage • Preventive archaeology • Archaeological dimension of World heritage • Management cultural heritage

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Introduction

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In addition, the papers give the volume broad geographical coverage (Africa, America, Asia, Australia, and Europe). The kind of properties considered also has been an important factor in this selection of texts, because they clearly show the idea of archaeological dimension; there are sites, which have traditionally been considered archaeological, in contrast with others like the city of Havana or the natural heritage of the Willandra Lakes.

World Heritage and the Archaeological Dimension

Cultural Heritage is not always spectacular or impressive in its forms, but it can improve our day-to-day life because its values are part of the background to what we are as a human group and with which we identify ourselves consciously or unconsciously. We believe archaeology is a science which can collaborate with this possibility and is in its turn a channel for encouraging interest in a past with multiple readings to enrich it and heighten difference, one of the pillars of social sustainability.

However, is this message compatible with “successful” World Heritage sites? We believe it is, and this is the line followed by the book introduced here. In such a context, a clear example has to be set by the World Heritage, whose treatment is expected to be the best and which ought therefore to generate an experience that can be transferred to other places with less recognition from institutions, science, or individuals.

World Heritage properties are not always inscribed as such for reasons of an archaeological nature, but we argue here that an archaeological dimension exists in nearly all of them. As stated in the document of Best Practices that accompanies this publication (see last chapter), Archaeological Heritage is understood “not as an isolated category or compartment within Cultural Heritage but as a dimension within all cultural properties with historic interest, where reconstruction and reinterpretation are made possible by the practice and use of Archaeology. The treatment of these properties should be in accordance with that dimension, as should the social considerations which shape and give meaning to Cultural Heritage” (see Chap. 8).

In this way, we define the archaeological dimension as a focal point in our approach to Cultural Heritage, for archaeology is in reality just one of the many sciences which influence the creation, configuration, and treatment of heritage, including those cases where the properties are supposedly “archaeological” or inscribed as such. Being one among many does not mean being diminished. It means being aware that many other perspectives exist from which to appreciate and engage with Cultural Heritage. In fact, not all of them even pertain to the world of science, yet they are of great importance all the same. The idea of complex thought (Morin, 2007) in an approach to knowledge—in this case, the treatment of cultural properties—is the key to understanding our discourse. We believe that the challenge in coming years will be to balance scientific and technical scrutiny with the more popular, political, or administrative view. World Heritage, we think, is weighed down by a heavy political and sometimes popular load, above all due to tourism, with bureaucratization and few scientific standards, if any. When science does make an appearance, it is treated as a separate compartment in isolation from other subjects and categories, including other sciences, except inasmuch as it is a value, which may prove decisive for a successful nomination. This compartmentalization is also transferred to management of the heritage, when professionals, members of the public, companies, or organizations with concurrent interests affecting the Cultural Heritage sometimes fail to recognize or even to have any dealings with one another. Finally, it seems to us that the current models for the treatment of cultural properties lack the flexibility the subject matter demands, including adaptability to the current juncture and consideration of the context, both in the so-called “western” or “postcolonial” values they propound and in the standardized treatments they offer properties. To overcome all these slanted visions, accepting multivocality as a working procedure and assuming the challenges posed by constant change are necessary to create dynamic spaces of communication between different agents implicated in heritage management and to seek a way to channel the keys to the various forms of knowledge in a proactive fashion, moving beyond transference and comprehension to action—the constant regeneration and formulation of new ways of understanding and implementing heritage management. In Fig. 1.1, it can be seen how the dimensions are interrelated and overlap in three cases. A single person may represent or perceive all three, an example being an architectural restorer who lives in a city and works on the recovery of its heritage. The objective of the model is not its static use as a grid but its adaptation to the current juncture, remembering that many facets have to be borne in mind in managing cultural properties.

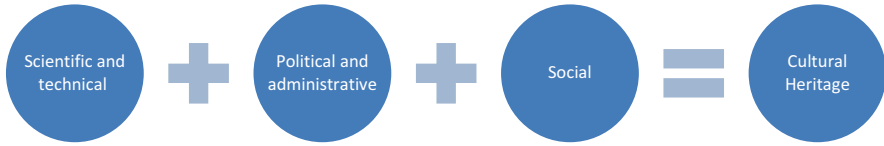


Fig. 1.1 Representative model of the dimensions of Cultural Heritage for assistance in the exercising of management (*Source*: the authors)

Scientific, technical	Architecture, town planning, <i>archaeology</i> , anthropology, restoration, landscape, law, sociology, management, enterprise, tourism, etc.
Political, administrative	Authority, revenue, protection/prevention, tourism
Social	Visitors (mostly tourists) Affected or implicated (citizens, communities, property, workers)

In what follows, we shall try to explain how we think the archaeological dimension should be treated with a view to acceptable heritage management, considering it, as we have said, as just one among many and knowing that the success of the strategy will depend upon consideration of all or many of the other possible dimensions. We also assume that the important thing is not this particular science or the Archaeological Heritage as such, but the way in which it forms part of the rest of the values and ways of understanding and treating Cultural Heritage and how we go about ensuring its maintenance and enjoyment by the whole of society. The essays we compile in this volume work along such lines. They are a selection from approximately 100 papers that were presented at the “First International Conference on Best Practices in World Heritage: Archaeology” (Castillo, 2012), held in Menorca on April 9–13, 2012, financed by the Government of Menorca, and directed by the two authors of this article, both from the Universidad Complutense de Madrid.

Although our prime criterion in selecting these essays was their quality, it must be said that many others of great interest had to be left out, since the selection was also influenced by our wish to cover a wide range of topics and geographical areas. We believe this enriches the volume and opens up different perspectives from which to address the matters we shall now be considering.

From Prevention to Social Implications

When we turn our thoughts to Best Practices in World Heritage: Archaeology, the first thing that is called to mind is inevitably prevention. This is not a matter of chance, for it responds to our own experience as researchers of management in the western context, as well as to the denunciations of World Heritage loss that are issued daily from both professional spheres and the citizens themselves.

Prevention is approached on the basis of two variables. An attempt is made to provide protection on the one hand from natural occurrences ranging from catastrophes to climatic patterns and on the other from the effects of human action, principally in the form of vandalism, pollution, and overexploitation of the Cultural Heritage. Prevention, then, is applied to places recognized for their cultural values, supposedly under protection, and subjected to a variety of environmental and social pressures.

At the Menorca Conference, the model proposed for Preventive Archaeology in the face of development work and earth movements was one based on the drawing up of archaeological charts prior to new territorial planning schemes or modifications to earlier ones (Querol & Castillo, 2012). In fact, the term Preventive Archaeology comprises a series of activities aimed at discovering and protecting the Archaeological Heritage before any type of incident may affect it. When this is impossible, the aim will be to review the impact as much as possible preventing the elements from being excavated or destroyed (Martínez & Castillo, 2007: 187). The plans would have to show sites considered untouchable, or “Reserve Zones,” as well as those catalogued as land subject to “Archaeological Caution,” or “Caution Areas,” which are considered of minor importance or whose existence is supposition. In the latter case, whenever there is a chance they will be affected by a planned development, an archaeological survey has to be performed with tests and a characterization study in order to permit their conservation and, where necessary, excavation. The purpose of this Preventive Archaeology is to reduce the number of archaeological excavations, which in recent decades has reached record heights with barely any increase in historical knowledge.

For this book, two essays have been selected which examine this preventive facet of Archaeology applied to the treatment of properties inscribed as World Heritage sites.

The first looks at an urban area, Old Havana, in Cuba. The administration responsible, which set a benchmark for decades in the quality of its heritage work, now includes Urban Archaeology among its tools, recognizing it must have procedures of its own within the territorial planning and recovery of the city. The author, Sonia Menéndez, shows us how the first steps are being taken towards the application of Preventive Archaeology in this context and how it is hoped to move in the near future beyond emergency excavations, or those exclusively associated with restoration, to others linked with the recovery of the city’s archaeological wealth and the revaluation of the city’s heritage.

Measures of this type, which appear to have been relatively common in European cities since the 1980s (*Archéologie Urbaine*, 1980), have hardly been implemented in Latin America, where so-called Historical Archaeology is gaining importance, but where much remains to be done in terms of a complex patrimonial view of properties. Moreover, Menéndez’s essay adopts the idea of prevention from the start. This is a new step forward, since it implies not only intervening whenever the historic city is affected but also preventing such effects whenever they are not really necessary. A strategy is also devised for identifying those spaces which permit the Historic Urban Landscape to be examined in more depth through Archaeology.

The idea of suitable documentation is the center of attention of another of the essays included here, dealing in this case with Cyprus. The “novelty” is the application of various complementary technologies to ensure a closer approach to scientific and technical knowledge of the island’s archaeological properties. Although Cyprus has three sites with World Heritage status, two of which were inscribed as such for reasons of an archaeological nature (Paphos 1980 and Choirokoitia 1998), nobody would deny that the entire island is an immense archaeological site. As the authors emphasize, the idea is that the information captured should be useful both for management purposes and for investigation. In this way, and thanks to a combination of techniques that prominently features work with 3D technologies, an optimization of resources is achieved. Furthermore, none of these techniques is aggressive toward the materiality of the property.

There is a twofold objective in the consideration of the use of new technologies within this selection of essays. One is to report on novelties in the application of certain tools, and the other is to make clear that it is impossible nowadays to work without them and that we should therefore cease to regard them merely as applied tools, considering them instead as generators of knowledge and forms of interpreting the past in themselves. Yet to be explored, in the meantime, are the options offered by media like the Internet, social networks, and mobile devices for the diffusion and treatment of heritage. There is no doubt they are the future.

We have spoken so far of prevention and documentation in places with full legal and social recognition for their archaeological value. However, let us recall that we are also interested in those where the archaeological dimension is less evident because it is not a protagonist, but must be taken into account for what it may contribute to knowledge of places and the revaluation of the Cultural Heritage.

This archaeological dimension can be applied, for example, to all those sites affected by territorial development, whether through construction work, mining, or other cases where social criteria and values prevail over archaeological ones. This sometimes occurs even in contexts whose starting point is the revaluation of the Cultural Heritage itself, cases in point being restorations of buildings which fail to take the aforementioned archaeological dimension into account. Such a failure is often the result of poor organization and planning, leading to the destruction of archaeological evidence without it having at least been documented.

Indeed, this loss of Archaeological Heritage takes place even when that heritage is supposedly the object of investigation. Besides material destruction in itself, we would also include here poorly prepared documentation or an absence of scientific quality in archaeological research. Many voices have drawn attention to such issues over the years (see, e.g., the classic studies in Cleere (1984, 1989) or other more recent contributions like those Willems and Van Den Dries (2007).

To prevent such losses, it is of vital importance to establish a hierarchy of archaeological values and adopt measures in accordance with it. Decisions must be taken about what to preserve, study, demolish, or ignore. For this model to function, it is evidently necessary to possess exhaustive knowledge of the existing archaeological register, and this register has to go beyond the contents of the subsoil to include both the archaeological dimension in work of a historic character aboveground and also knowledge of the evolution of cultural landscapes, urban, or otherwise.

This register, which will be both fully documented and periodically updated, must form part of many other registers, above all those dealing with environmental values or land legislation.

For all these reasons, the link between archaeological management and territorial planning is unquestionable. In natural areas, however, the archaeological dimension is less evolved or treated less exhaustively. Bearing in mind that many of the sites with Natural World Heritage status are very large parks situated in areas whose resources have been of key importance for the development of human life, we wish to emphasize the need to take the archaeological perspective into account in their documentation, protection, and diffusion. It is very difficult on our planet to find a natural area that has not been anthropized, so archaeological study is both possible and desirable in all of them. Among the selection here, the essay on the Willandra Lakes in Australia follows this line. It shows how places that are emblematic of human expansion and evolution on that continent form part of the natural site and have been prevented from deteriorating despite farming activities in fragile zones with known archaeological remains. The park furthermore contains an important ethnographic and anthropological substratum, including even the presence of an aboriginal population that often establishes relations of other types, not only with the territory or the natural area but also with the archaeological sites themselves, which in some cases, like burials, are linked to their ancestors.

The involvement of these communities, through their elders, in decision-taking on matters concerning the park's management is proving extremely important, since it has modified the strategy for protecting these burial sites. Another outstanding feature of the work carried out is the search for solutions through the consensus of all the implicated agents, including people with private properties in the park, most of them associated with the cultivation of crops and pasture. Various plans are making it possible to adopt measures to prevent the zone from deteriorating, although the authors warn of the importance of continuing to foster these plans and measures and of investigating and monitoring the archaeological register, since the park remains very vulnerable.

The consideration of the communities who cohabit with World Heritage is one of the most burning issues of recent years. It is undeniable that great importance is now attached to immateriality, cultural expressions, identities, and respect for the same. The Menorca Conference devoted an entire session to what we termed "Social Action," understood as all those actions destined to incentivize citizen participation. This session, along with the one on policies of World Heritage protection, resulted in the presentation of a surprisingly large number of papers denouncing the way in which World Heritage fosters partial images of the cultures and peoples who live on the sites and proposing a search for alternatives. With some honorable exceptions, however, there were hardly any proactive presentations of actual attempts to find solutions or implement experiences. Among those few, one we find of particular interest deals with one of the most famous Jesuit missions, São Miguel in Brazil (Saladino and Wichers). Presented here is a project which tries to overcome the traditional view of Archaeology by inserting it in local life and establishing a process for assessing the results, something unusual in our field. The results of the assessment demonstrated that part of the aboriginal population felt excluded from

the discourse and had not even dared to work on the project. This meant that the team responsible felt obliged to modify the historic discourses in order to make them less exclusive of these sectors of the population, so achieving a reapproximation of the population to their Cultural Heritage. It is worth drawing attention to the fact that this initiative, supported by the theoretical framework of university research, had its origin in the world of private enterprise.

Another topic that was frequently dealt with at the Menorca Conference was that of the initiatives undertaken by different states for the protection of their World Heritage, with a critical vision brought to bear from the perspective of Archaeology. This matter, of course, has been the object of various reflections in recent years (Brattli, 2009; Coningham, Cooper, & Pollard, 2006; Labadi, 2001; *Norwegian Archaeological Review*, 2009; *World Archaeology*, 2007), and an essay has been included in this volume which, we believe, touches on many of the issues addressed in those texts and which also takes the form of a denunciation of the deterioration of the Archaeological Heritage of a particular country. Moreover, the context, the aftermath of a war, is a particularly difficult one for forward development. The case in question is Libya (di Lernia and Salinaro), a state with several World Heritage sites (Cyrene, Leptis Magna, and Sabratha) which largely represent the classical and traditional view of Archaeology. Nearly all are in the north of the country, and actions of recovery are being (or will shortly be) carried out in the wake of the conflict. However, opportune measures have yet to be taken for the conservation of the vast archaeological wealth of the south of the country, including a site (Tadrart Acacus) that was granted World Heritage status for its rock art. The essay includes a number of proposals and points to the need to treat this archaeological wealth from a broader perspective, such as that of a cultural landscape worthy of valuation and protection in its entirety. The idea of a landscape in opposition to that of a specific site, which is what most World Heritage properties are, is also interrogated owing to the importance of recognizing the value of archaeological interpretation beyond concrete remains. The challenge in a country under reconstruction, like the one dealt with here, will be to make the most of this new opportunity to devise better ways of managing the Archaeological Heritage, which can be given impetus as a resource for growth and the improvement of the inhabitants' quality of life.

This idea of overall treatment, based on protection through territorial planning and an understanding of Archaeology as also a landscape, is taken up again in the next essay, which is the last specific case study in this book. The text, however, has another particularity, which is that the place in question—the spectacular set of pre-historic sites of the island of Menorca—is aspiring to World Heritage status. Menorca's megalithic architecture, together with an ancient landscape and a natural history that led to its inscription as a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO in 1993, makes it a special place that requires Best Practice for its management. The efforts made by the island's administrations to equip the sites with a legal framework for protection are beginning to bear fruit thanks to the systematic collation of archaeological information in municipal planning catalogues. This strong legal protection is also a good starting point that not only permits Best Practices in archaeological management but may also provide an impulse for the process of World Heritage nomination.

And becoming World Heritage, or being recognized as such, increasingly requires interaction with the people who live alongside the cultural properties. This is addressed in the document of Best Practices which ends this publication. We need an ordered corpus of tools and actions that will help us to situate the archaeological dimension in the most appropriate place within the treatment of Cultural Heritage.

Toward Best Practices

The initial draft of the document of Best Practices was introduced and published on the conference website, and criticisms and alternatives were invited. Moreover, it was discussed again at the last session of the conference in the original format of small groups. The text published in the final section of this volume appears exactly as it stood at the end of the conference. It has now become the starting point for the ICOMOS Scientific Committee for Archaeological Heritage Management (ICAHM)—UNESCO’s advisory body on Cultural Heritage—to endorse its adaptation for use in the inscription and treatment of World Heritage sites (ICAHM, 2012).

In this context, we think it best to emphasize that the essays selected and published in this volume are guided by the spirit of Best Practice and were chosen for this very reason. Many of them are only proposals or studies for which results are awaited, and there are even some, like the one on Menorca, which refer to properties that have yet to be inscribed as World Heritage. This has to do with the proactive posture of which we spoke at the beginning of this introduction and with the importance of recognizing a reality while at the same time motivating its change. The ultimate objective of this book is therefore to encourage the implementation of these “Best Practices” and to incentivize work in this direction.

We therefore return to our initial contention: the fact that archaeological management cannot and should not be treated exclusively from the viewpoint of the science which precedes it adjectivally, even when this is taken together with other sciences and techniques or legal and administrative procedures, but also has a great deal to do with other variables and dimensions. Sentiments are of special importance in our view, including the way archaeological sites are perceived by the local population and the visiting public, the exact makeup of this whole body of participants, and whether or not they are genuine accomplices in the correct treatment of Cultural Heritage. Paradoxical as it may seem, given that this last aspect is intrinsic to all Cultural Heritage, and since definitions of the concept agree it is human groups who choose the assets to be preserved as representative of our past, nonspecialized people are seldom actively consulted on questions of Archaeological Heritage management. There is a greater abundance of pioneering experience with movable properties, especially in relation with public presentation and how discourses are understood, including the whole question of learning about the visitors’ experiences (Hood, 1983). What is known today as Public Archaeology is making attempts to recognize these perceptions, but the fact of the matter is that we are still only just beginning. Faced with plenty of doubts and a shortage of studies on the actions we adopt to

integrate the inexpert public (Simpson & Williams, 2008), work of this kind is generally focused on spaces specially prepared for the visiting public. Other perceptions are barely taken into account, and it is rare for the Archaeological Heritage to be related to other values or social interests, or for there even to be acknowledgment of other discourses generating spaces that are more open than the officially inscribed archaeological site, such as cultural landscapes, or which recount alternative histories, or simply present an archaeological dimension that is unrecognized outside the purview of specialists.

If we accept this notion of the archaeological dimension of cultural properties, and the fact that the science of Archaeology advances and changes rapidly, as do the various discourses it generates and the question of which past is chosen and who it is for, then we invite readers to reflect whether the pyramids of Egypt or rock art is really reflecting what Archaeology is today. Do we believe that the exceptional and universal value that led to the inscription of these places as World Heritage sites allows archaeological science to perform a role concordant with what we understand by it today? Some of these places, it seems to us, offer a nineteenth-century romantic image of Archaeology, and there too we believe that Best Practices are very necessary from various perspectives. We think there is a need to reeducate the gaze, overaccustomed to monumental archaeological spaces, and make it more social, more “common” in a way, and more representative of historic spaces that evolve over time, not merely of spectacular material remains, chronological showcases, static photographs of other ages, or anecdotes used to adorn historical facts. Today, it is the consideration of the archaeological dimension which makes it possible to contribute that other information and create that new gaze. However, such efforts work in two directions. When understanding Cultural Heritage as something common, we need to also reeducate ourselves, learning from the people who live with and appreciate cultural properties.

Indeed, we sometimes wonder if we are not closer to the archaeological dimension today in other spaces, like cities and landscapes, than in those which have been granted heritage status for archaeological reasons, where nobody—not even the inexpert population—would question that dimension. This archaeological perspective thus becomes another type of added value for heritage sites, perhaps more closely adjusted to a humanist mentality, more sensitive to what moves us as scientists, and more discreet in its public appearance, but at the same time vital for reinforcing and discovering identities, and for bringing a new meaning and a new gaze to the World Heritage that would truly reflect a diversity we see as being lost. In short, Best Practice means preventing this loss from recurring, and Archaeology and its management can and must make a major contribution in this respect.

Acknowledgments We would like to thank Isabel Salto-Weis, friend and colleague, scientific secretary of the aforementioned 2012 Menorca Conference, and a member of the project leading to these initiatives.

We would also like to thank the Spanish National R&D&I Plan (2009–2013) for “The treatment of archaeological properties in World Heritage cities of the European Union and Latin America” and to the other friends and companions of the team: Gabriela Mårtens, María Mestre, Susana Mora, Teresa Sagardoy, Karina Rodríguez, and Ana Yáñez.

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