

**Recommendations of the First International Conference of ICOMOS on  
Archaeological Parks and Sites  
23.-25. February 2015  
Salalah, Sultanate of Oman**

**Foreword:**

Archaeological parks contain excavated and un-excavated cultural remains that can if properly documented and analyzed provide a unique way of understanding the human past to visitors. To realize their potential value, they must be carefully protected. Excavated areas must be conserved by qualified professionals and made ready for public display. As such the archaeological park is a medium that conserves and transmits scientific and historical knowledge to the public.

Interestingly enough the term *archaeological park* appears neither in the terminology of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, nor in any ICOMOS guidance texts, recommendations or charters. Nonetheless, several World Heritage sites, including the Land of Frankincense, Oman; Borobudur, Indonesia; Petra, Jordan etc. are hosting such parks within their boundaries.

Therefore the ICOMOS experts and academic institutions who participated in the first international conference of ICOMOS on Archaeological Parks and Sites, held from 23.-25. February 2015 in Salalah, Sultanate of Oman, recommend the following:

**‘Salalah Recommendation’**

Taking into consideration the following documents;

The Recommendation on International Principles Applicable to Archaeological Excavations, formulated at the UNESCO General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (New Delhi, 1956).

The Venice Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites (Venice, 1964).

The European Charter on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (London 1969, revised in Valetta, 1992).

Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (UNESCO, 1970)

The Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (The World Heritage Convention (UNESCO, 1972).

The ICOMOS Charter for the Protection and Management of the Archaeological Heritage

(Lausanne, 1990).

The ICOMOS Document on Authenticity (Nara, 1994).

The ICOMOS International Cultural Tourism Charter (Mexico City, 1999).

The Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (UNESCO, 2001).

The Xi'an Declaration on the Conservation of the Setting of Heritage Structures, Sites and Areas (Xi'an, 2005).

Annex 3 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, pp 85-87, Cultural Landscapes (UNESCO, 2008).

Menorca Declaration on Development and Use of Best Practices in the Management of Archaeological World Heritage Sites (Menorca, 2012).

**The recommendations are as follows:**

1. That the term 'archaeological park' should be included in the official general terminology of UNESCO/ ICOMOS and in particular in the World Heritage Operational Guidelines
2. That an *Archaeological Park* consists of:
  - a. Archaeological remains (below and above ground, movable and immovable) including archaeological surfaces. The archaeological park should have at least the size of the underground extent of the archaeological remains (archaeological site)
  - b. A carefully designed landscape that will ensure protection of archaeological remains below and above ground surface, and effective interpretation of them to visitors.
  - c. An area to which access is effectively regulated, with controlled entrances, surrounded by an adequate buffer zone.

**3. Definition:**

*An archaeological park is the link between scientific research and the public.*

*It can be termed as a definable area, distinguished by the value of heritage resources and land related to such resources, having the potential to become an interpretive, educational and recreational resource for the public, which should be protected and conserved.*

The following protocols should be applied at archaeological parks:

**Excavation**

It is important that excavated areas should be accessible to the public in archaeological parks. Consequently the following parameters must be taken into consideration:

Securing access for the visitors and ensuring the security of the visitors themselves (including children and people with special needs), as well as protection of archaeological remains from damage that may be done by visitors. Paths should lead to secured excavated areas.

Excavations should be minimal and in accord with international ethical standards, but also understandable and well interpreted for visitors. Whenever possible, non-destructive methods should be used to investigate archaeological sites.

Excavation and conservation should be executed in a way that provides adequate and guaranteed protection of the archaeological remains *in situ* and should be well interpreted to visitors.

Furthermore, visualization of the outer limits of the complete archaeological setting should be clearly demonstrated.

The scientific documentation of excavations and conservation must be available at the site if possible.

### **Conservation:**

The aim of conservation at archaeological parks must be consistent with all applicable international standards. It must respect authenticity and integrity of all historic survivals remaining on display for scientific and public information and must be based on scientific documentation. Un-scientific re-building *in situ* is strictly forbidden.

Conjectural reconstruction outside the archaeological area is feasible provided that it is clearly legible, well documented and honest in its presentation. In all cases, treatments must be reversible.

The primary aim of conservation is to protect the material source for present and future scientific investigation. The retention of well-protected movable objects *in situ* should be envisaged.

If preservation can be ensured, suitable objects from museum displays can be returned to original archaeological context for special, limited-time exhibitions.

There are three possible types of treatment of replacing a part of original material for the education of visitors. They are:

**Anastylosis:** where a fallen element remains as it fell and its original form and position is obvious. Anastylosis is a precise science and there are many tools including computer modelling to make this activity possible.

**Consolidation:** where weak parts of historic structures or lacunae are strengthened with new material in order to return the structure to a stable and safe condition. Here the addition of new material must be clearly marked.

**Interpretative Stabilization:** This may be appropriate if it is completely reversible and re-treatable and does not damage original materials or disturb original context. Any material added should be clearly discernible from the original.

### **Site management and protection:**

Effective archaeological park management requires the capacity to identify the personnel, facilities, equipment, and technologies necessary for:

The authenticity and integrity of the cultural and natural resources in an archaeological landscape,

The protection of the health and safety of visitors.

The provision of an experience to the visitor that is educational and enjoyable, and

An archaeological research plan based in the need for site preservation, and the need to provide information that will engage visitors, creating advocates for the site.

Having identified the required assets, a zoning plan and management organization must be developed that is able to obtain, maintain, and deploy them in the programs and activities that are necessary to objectives 1-4.

Effective park management should respect the environment and associate the local community.

All in all, four domains for the management may be identified.

Communication and coordination with essential stakeholders at the international, national, and local level (e.g., communities, businesses)

Personnel acquisition and training, finance and budget and technological services

Research and monitoring, preservation of structures, subsurface sites, and artifacts, conservation of natural resources,

Emergency medical services, search and rescue, law enforcement, visitor center, interpretation, education and maintenance.

Depending on the complexity of the park, appropriate management institutions should be established.

Management of an archaeological park must attend to the entire region surrounding the park, as development nearby can adversely affect cultural and natural resources in the park. Conversely, if park management is effective, surrounding communities become allies in preservation in conservation, and can realize economic and social benefit that will serve to bolster the alliance with park management.

Property boundaries and, if applicable, buffer zones for the whole archaeological setting should be clearly visualized.

Visual integrity should be respected.

### **Didactics:**

As a bridge between technical science and public information, the transfer of knowledge and information plays a central role in archaeological parks in communicating with different audiences.

Following the guidelines of the UNESCO New Delhi Recommendations 1956, archaeological sites should be provided with site museums and interpretation centers to host the movable heritage of the site. Here, effective and engaging visualization programs should be established to additionally serve as a didactic communication platform for the visitor. In addition to the archaeological sites as primary historic sources additional space outside the sites may be used for ethno- archaeological experimentation and visualization for the public.

Information systems at the excavations themselves and in the park are also a pre- requisite. Didactics would greatly benefit from a formal plan for interpretation and visitor services.

### **Landscaping**

The primary purpose of archaeological landscaping is to protect archaeological surfaces as primary scientific information systems.

Where parts of the archaeology are to remain unexcavated, or where excavated sections are to be backfilled, it is often useful to carefully landscape the ground around the revealed archaeology in order to create view-scapes and viewing points.

In general, view-sheds are essential elements of the archaeological landscape and should be carefully analyzed and replicated where this will increase the interpretability of the landscape, and is not destructive of archaeological materials or misleading to the visitor.

Access paths along with guiding systems indicating the different lengths of tours should be part of the orientation program. The access paths should also serve as emergency lines. Protective shelters and rest places at regular intervals should be provided.

Landscaping and the use of careful planting can provide valuable information for the visitor.

Planting within the parks should be non destructive to the archaeological setting (above and below ground).

Salalah, February 25<sup>th</sup>. 2015