

New training initiatives for archaeological site management in the Mediterranean - 2007

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Good management of archaeological sites is now clearly recognised as critical to their conservation, and indeed their survival. The condition of *in situ* mosaics is a measure of the effectiveness of the management on any one site. Actively deteriorating pavements are all too frequently encountered on sites throughout the Mediterranean region, as the result of a management vacuum.

Tunisia

Good conservation certainly requires adept technical skills to carry out appropriate treatments. The training initiatives for mosaic conservation technicians in Tunisia have been reported at the ICCM conference in Thessalonki in 2002, and more recently in 2005 at the Hammamet conference (Roby, Alberti, Ben Abed). Since 1998 the Tunisian Institut national du Patrimoine (INP) and the Getty Conservation Institute (GCI) have trained numerous technicians in the conservation of mosaics. Over recent years, regional teams have been successfully developed to carry out essential conservation activities, such as documentation, selection of materials and appropriate interventions, and monitoring of condition.

However, overall conservation strategy needs to be planned at a professional and managerial level, taking into account larger issues of relative significance, risk, resource allocation, regional planning etc. Therefore, the GCI has worked with the INP to develop a complementary course, specifically on the conservation and management of sites for young Tunisian professionals – archaeologists, architects, historians – engaged in archaeological sites. Over a three week period between 18 March – 7 April 2007, some two dozen participants were introduced to conservation theory, documentation, deterioration and conservation of materials, presentation and site management, using a range of ancient sites in Tunisia. Both courses are designed to build a strong conservation framework of young professionals in the country.

Further details of technician training will be reported in the paper in the forthcoming publication of the Hammamet conference. Summary details of both training initiatives are also provided on the GCI website:

http://www.getty.edu/conservation/field_projects/mosaics/mosaics_component2.html

Eastern Mediterranean

Since late 2005, ICCROM has sponsored training in site management at a regional level in the eastern Mediterranean, with various partners (ALECSO - The Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization and other national authorities). This is within the umbrella of its *ATHĀR Programme - Core Regional Course on Conservation of Heritage Sites in the Arab Region*. The first ATHAR course took place in Tripoli and Byblos, Lebanon, between 14 November 2005 and 27 January 2006, with twenty one professionals from Lebanon, Syria and Jordan. The objective of this first course was the development of professional skills in the conservation and management of sites, forming a regional network of specialists, and

prompting conservation training at university level. Through such professional training, ATHĀR also aims to strengthen the work of official heritage institutions in the Region.

The curriculum encompassed the breadth of heritage management issues: conservation theory (with reference to the Arab Region), deterioration of materials and condition assessment, preventive and remedial conservation, site planning, presentation and management.

http://www.iccrom.org/eng/prog2006-07_en/08athar_en/archive_en/2005_11arkol_en.shtml

The second ATHĀR course took place in Umm Qais, Jordan and Bosra, Syria between 24 January - 3 February 2006, with the theme: 'Documentation and Management of Heritage Sites in the Arab Region'. Focussing on these communities living amidst archaeological contexts, it aimed to promote integrated value-based management. The course was attended by some twenty site managers from the Departments of Antiquities of Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria.

http://www.iccrom.org/eng/prog2006-07_en/08athar_en/archive_en/2005_01sitemanag_en.shtml

The forthcoming ATHĀR course, taking place in Amman, Jordan, will return to the core theme of site conservation, albeit with a shorter format (10 June - 12 July 2007). Its geographical scope will expand to countries beyond the Near East, to include participants from the Gulf States and countries of North Africa.

http://www.iccrom.org/eng/01train_en/announce_en/2007_06AtharJOR_en.shtml

The INP/GCI and ICCROM courses have differed in their organisation and geographical scope. Yet the curriculum of all of these site management courses necessarily included the conservation of mosaics *in situ*, these being important and specifically problematic components of archaeological sites in the Mediterranean. Significantly, the courses address mosaic conservation within the larger context of sustainable management. They are certainly very welcome and sorely needed initiatives. However, their long-term impact will depend on sustained support of individuals at a local level, and the spawning of further technical training programmes similar to that of the INP/GCI in Tunisia.