

The Interpretation and Presentation of Giza Cultural Heritage Site in Egypt

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Introduction

Giza Plateau is a part of the World Heritage Site that encompasses Memphis – the ancient Pharaonic capital – and its Necropolis, the Pyramid Fields from Giza to Dahshur, since 1979. It has an immense necropolis full of funerary monuments, including pyramids' complexes and *mastabas* date back to thousands of years. However, interpretation and presentation of this world-importance heritage site don't meet the international standards; the matter that in turn affects the site conservation.

Literature Review

In its final report, the ICOMOS Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites identified the terms 'Interpretation' and 'Presentation'. It stated that '*Interpretation refers to the full range of potential activities intended to heighten public awareness and enhance understanding of cultural heritage site. These can include print and electronic publications, public lectures, on-site and directly related off-site installations, educational programs, community activities, and ongoing research, training, and evaluation of the interpretation process itself*'. It also asserted that '*Presentation more specifically denotes the carefully planned communication of interpretive content through the arrangement of interpretive information, physical access, and interpretive infrastructure at a cultural heritage site. It can be conveyed through a variety of technical means, including, yet not requiring, such elements as informational panels, museum-type displays, formalized walking tours, lectures and guided tours, and multimedia applications and websites*'.

In a word, site interpretation comprises several steps including: the choice of what to preserve, how to preserve it, and how it is to be presented to the public. The

(ICOMOS) Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites emphasized the need for clear principles for interpretation and presentation of worldwide heritage sites as essential components of heritage conservation efforts and as a means of enhancing public appreciation and understanding of cultural heritage. This Charter defined seven fundamental principles of Interpretation and Presentation of heritage sites including: I) Access and Understanding; II) Information Sources; III) Attention to Setting and Context; IV) Preservation of Authenticity; V) Planning for Sustainability; VI) Concern for Inclusiveness; and VII) Importance of Research, Training, and Evaluation.

Methodology

This paper contributes to the sustainable conservation of Giza world-famous Cultural Heritage Site in Egypt, as it aims to evaluate the implementation of these principals in the interpretation and presentation of Giza. To approach this complex phenomenon, decision-oriented evaluation approach underpinned five qualitative data collection methods including documentation, semi-structured interviews and focus groups, was adopted. Documentation analyzes relevant literature on Giza site significance and ICOMOS Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites and its principals. Direct observation conducted by the researchers following a check list with fixed observation notes. Semi-structured interviews gather data from the management levels of Giza cultural heritage site (34 interviews); while other semi-structured interview was conducted with tour guides (22 interviews). Finally, focus groups collect data from local people from horses and camels riders, and pyramids and tombs guards (four focus groups of total 27 participants). Carrying out this variety of methods allows us to compare between the outcomes, enriching discussing results, and ensuring research validity and reliability. The literature review conducted for the purposes of this research project was also instrumental in developing the interview protocols.

Results

Outcomes were then translated, coded and the implications that evaluate the implementation of ICOMOS principals in the interpretation and presentation of Giza have resulted and findings were then discussed. The results provide Giza cultural heritage site managers with a knowledge and value base for making and defending decisions regarding the sustainable conservation of the site through the implementation of the principals of ICOMOS Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation.

Conclusion and Implications

The paper identified the managerial problems in terms of the interpretation and the presentation when a UNESCO cultural heritage destination is evaluated.

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