Tauric Chersonese
(Ukraine)
No 1411

Official name as proposed by the State Party
The ancient city of Tauric Chersonese and its chora (5th century BC – 14th century AD)

Location
Sevastopol, Administrative Region of Sevastopol
Ukraine

Brief description
Tauric Chersonese and its chora are the remains of an ancient city located on the Heraclean Peninsula in southwest Crimea. Chersonese city was founded in the 5th century BCE as a colonial settlement of the Dorian Greeks and soon after became a major commercial port for trade in the Northern Black Sea area. The city is surrounded by an agricultural hinterland which has been demarcated by the city’s inhabitants into separate plots starting from the 4th century BCE. The most distinctive feature of this chora is its perpetuation of the city’s orthogonal planning system in 400 rectangular allotments of equal size.

Category of property
In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a serial nomination of 7 sites.

ICOMOS considers that in terms of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (November 2011), paragraph 47, the property is also a cultural landscape.

1 Basic data

Included in the Tentative List
13 September 1989

International Assistance from the World Heritage Fund for preparing the Nomination
None

Date received by the World Heritage Centre
30 January 2011

Background
This is a new nomination.

Consultations
ICOMOS has consulted its International Scientific Committee on Archaeological Heritage Management and several independent experts.

Technical Evaluation Mission
An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the property from 27 September to 1 October 2012.

Additional information requested and received from the State Party
ICOMOS sent a letter to the State Party on 18 September 2012 requesting additional information with regard to the description of the identification of underwater components, the justification for Outstanding Universal Value, integrity, future development plans, protection and management as well as the monitoring system. In a second letter sent on 20 December 2012, ICOMOS requested further information related to the protection mechanism for the buffer zone, the envisaged conservation programme and its financing, the finalization of the Management Plan, the exact contribution of one serial component (7) and the name of the property. The State Party provided additional information in response to the first set of questions raised on 25 October 2012 and to the second request for additional information on 28 February 2013. The information provided in both documents is included under the relevant sections below.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report
6 March 2013

2 The property

Description
The property is a serial nomination of seven component sites, which present the remains of the city of Tauric Chersonese and the agricultural hinterland that supported an extensive viticulture and provided products for the city’s significant export trade. The city was founded in the 5th century BCE and existed uninterruptedly for over 2000 years until its sudden decline in the 15th century CE. Chersonese city and its chora occupied an area of more than 10,000 hectares covering most of the Heraclean Peninsula. 267 hectares of the remaining best preserved structures were selected as representative sites of the most characteristic features of the city and its chora. These component sites shall be considered separately below:

Ancient City of Tauric Chersonese
Located on a peninsula between Quarantinnyaya and Pesochnaya Bay, the remains of the ancient city of Tauric Chersonese are visible in a vast archaeological area of over 40 hectares. The city was inhabited continuously between the 5th century BCE and the 15th century CE, when it suddenly declined and remained abandoned for centuries until it was rediscovered as a strategic location by the military in the 20th century. It appears that its very abandonment and the later military use of part of the site as a quarantine cemetery have led to an isolation that allowed the physical preservation of much of the site until present times. Merely an orthodox monastery built in the centre of the ancient city has left an irreversible mark of later usage.
The city is surrounded by fortification walls in two lines. The first of these dates back to the 5th century BCE while the second was added during an expansion in the 4th and 3rd century BCE. The city was entered through no less than four gates including a main city and a port gate. Chersonese’s street network is laid out according to the orthogonal model introduced by Hippodamus of Miletus, with parallel longitudinal streets intersected at right angles to form accurate rectangular blocks. The main street which functioned as the linear centre in this rectangular system, connected the main entrance gate and the temenos, a sacred enclosure at the north-eastern end of the city. The remains of several public building complexes but also residential neighbourhoods and early Christian monuments remain documented in the archaeological remains.

Chersonese chora on the Heraclean Peninsula

The remaining six of the seven serial components are presented as representing features of the chora of Chersonese City. The chora combines the agricultural hinterland of the city, in which all land plots were owned and used by citizens of the poleis. Developed from the 4th century BCE onwards, the land plots were clearly demarcated by a network of roads and division walls, especially in the immediate vicinity of the city and along the cape areas of the Heraclean Peninsula. These delineations divided the chora into more than 400 equal plots of 26.5 hectares each.

Component site two, the chora plot at Yukharina Gully, lies in the centre of the Heraclean Peninsula and illustrates land division features of the second half of the 4th century BCE. The property contains five almost complete plots of 25.5 hectares each, together with fragments of six other plots. The third serial component, the chora plot in Berman’s Gully, is approximately 20 hectares in size. It contains remains of Stone Age and Bronze Age settlements, which appeared before the area was demarcated as well as fragments of two chora plots, unearthed ruins of several farmsteads, Roman and medieval tower fortifications and water supply systems.

In the fourth component on the Bezymynnaya Height, a site of 17 hectares, one finds the remains of an outer boundary segment of the chora demarcations. Since this property lies at the highest point of the peninsula it also provides a view over the wider chora landscape. The component also contains the remains of a multi-layered fortification structure which made use of this strategic high point. Component number five, the chora plot in the Streletskaya Gully, contains fragments of two Hellenistic chora plots in an area of 17 hectares. It is said to contain some of the best preserved examples of vineyard planting and division walls.

The chora plot on the isthmus of the Mayachny Peninsula forms the sixth component and contains a fortified Hellenistic settlement, identified as the so-called old Chersonese mentioned by the Greek geographer Strabo, and two parallel lines of defensive walls. Unfortunately the south-western part of the settlement was destroyed when the coastal artillery battery established its base. The seventh and final component is the chora plot on Cape Vinogradny, a scenic rock cliff setting with stunning views. Archaeological excavations undertaken here revealed remains of a cave church, a crypt with tombs, and traces of a monastery which functioned from the 6th up to the 15th century.

History and development

The city of Tauric Chersonese was founded in the 5th century BCE and in the following centuries expanded its chora. Some earlier small scale Stone and Bronze Age settlements have previously existed at the spot of the city but are not precisely dated. Originally a small trading and exploration post to the north of the Black Sea, Chersonese soon developed into a classic ancient Greek polis. Agricultural needs and activities determined the layout and demarcation of the chora which is characterized by the plot sizes needed for viticulture. In the first half of the 3rd century Chersonese was known as the most productive wine centre of the Black Sea.

However, the location of Chersonese at the crossroads of two Black Sea routes equally strengthened its role as a trade centre and transit port for sea trade. Tauric Chersonese became an intermediary port for trade relations with the populations in north-eastern and mountainous Crimea, the capital of the Scythian state of Neapolis and through further trading posts such as Olbia to the Scythians of the lower Dnieper and Don regions. Its main trade goods besides wine were handicraft items, which were exchanged for grain and livestock products.

Chersonese’s decline started as early as in the middle of the 3rd century BCE when a period of prolonged Greco-Scythian wars affected trade conditions and later the Greeks lost their domains in Crimea. In 63 BCE, the Romans send an expedition at the request of the Chersonese and managed to subdue the Scythians. In the first centuries CE the Chersonese launched several attempts to restore their independence which succeeded in the mid-2nd century. Formally part of the Roman Empire Chersonese again became a strategic outpost.

However, significant changes took place in the land use, as grapes ceased to be the main crop and were replaced by livestock farming and stone quarries, both with radically different requirements in terms of land-use. The 2nd and 3rd century CE also saw some intensification in urban development. Starting from the second half of the 3rd century, the north-eastern frontiers of the Roman Empire were increasingly raided by the Goths. After the breakdown of the Roman Empire, Chersonese remained an allied city to Rome and Byzantium. With the advent of Christianization, churches were established in Chersonese in the 4th and 5th century and later an early medieval culture and economy established. In the 6th century, the Byzantine name of the city, Cherson, completely replaced the previous Chersonese.
Even during the so-called Dark Ages (7th to mid-9th century) Cherson continued its trade and handicraft production. However, in the 9th century it suffered the vehement wars between Khazars, Hungarians and Pechenegs. Important was also the so-called Khorsun campaign of Prince Vladimir of Kiev in the 10th century, as it imposed a nine months siege on Cherson which ended with a dramatic seizure of the city. After yet another intense period of trade and exchange particularly with ports like Venice and Genua, from the mid-13th century onwards the city fell victim to nomadic raids and was seized by the Golden Horde. With this the initially gradual and later complete decline of Chersonese started, which was abandoned until coastal artillery batteries were installed in the area in the second half of the 19th century and early 20th century.

3 Justification for inscription, integrity and authenticity

Comparative analysis
The methodology of the comparative analysis is clearly set out in the nomination dossier. The aim is to compare the three key aspects of the site in a chronological-regional and thematic framework. These key aspects are identified as (1) Chersonese’s role in the movement of people in the Greek, Roman and Byzantine period as a centre in the periphery, (2) its well-preserved grid layout with what is claimed an unparalleled preservation of housing blocks, and finally (3) its lot division in the chora which provides a well-preserved testimony to large-scale Greek viticulture. The comparison is therefore focused on (1) cities which were essential for the movement of people in the Black Sea region, (2) cities illustrating remains of orthogonal Greek planning, and (3) sites illustrating the land division systems and viticulture, which survived from the Hellenistic civilization and which were used over several centuries.

The comparison of other centres of movement and trade is focused on a number of already inscribed World Heritage properties, including the Ancient City of Nessebar, Bulgaria, inscribed in 1983 as a Greek settlement on the west Coast of the Black Sea (criteria (iii) and (iv)), the City of Safranbolu, Turkey, inscribed in 1994 as an important caravan station in the medieval east-west trade (criteria (ii), (iv) and (v)), and the Old City of Acre, Israel, inscribed in 2001 as a Phoenician city on the Mediterranean coast, now most distinguished by its Ottoman architecture (criteria (ii), (iii) and (v)).

The State Party further compares cities which are not recognized as World Heritage but are included on Tentative Lists, such as Sudak in eastern Crimea, a Genoese outpost with Mediterranean trade connections and Tanais, a Greek colony at the Sea of Azov, which is placed on the Tentative List of the Russian Federation as a key site for the trade relations between the Greek and the Scythians. Other sites compared include Olbia, Kerch (the Greek Panticapaeum) and Feodosia (Theodosia).

ICOMOS considers that the aspects of exchange of cultures, movements of people and trade across the Black Sea occurred in a variety of Greek outposts, and that the cities of Olbia, Tanais, Kimmerikón, Theodosia as well as Kerkinits are perhaps the most relevant comparators. Chersonese among these illustrates an exceptional state of conservation. However, ICOMOS considers that it has not been shown in the comparative analysis, how, compared to the other ancient centres around the Black Sea its archaeological remains can be said to reflect this movement of people in an outstanding way. Yet, what seems well illustrated is that Chersonese maintained its role as a centre in the periphery far longer than any of the other outposts and is therefore unique in its continuity and longevity as a mercantile centre along the different Black Sea routes.

The comparison of Greek cities which illustrate exceptionally well preserved orthogonal grid systems, starts with a view on World Heritage properties including Nessebar, Bulgaria, which however does not preserve its original grid plan, Butrint, Albania, inscribed in 1992 and extended in 1999 (criterion (iii)), the Archaeological Site of Cyrene, Libya, inscribed in 1982 (criteria (ii), (iii) and (vi)), which does present a significant grid system but is not explicitly recognized for this, as well as other World Heritage properties linked to the Greek and Roman civilizations. Among other sites Nicopolis is said comparable on the basis of its orthogonal grid plan, which however was changed to a larger extent than Chersonese as its heyday was in the Byzantine period. Other comparators include Olbia in Ukraine, Apollonia in Bulgaria and Istria in Romania.

ICOMOS considers that it may be difficult to establish how the urban layout following a Hippodamian Plan could be considered exceptional in comparison to the remaining examples in Greece and around the Mediterranean. In the additional information provided at ICOMOS’ request, the State Party acknowledged that the urban layout was not exceptional in this context and that it was not intended to propose the typology of the urban plan as being of Outstanding Universal Value, but its longevity and continuity as result of the respect paid to it over centuries. The State Party further added that the urban plan was only exceptional in a typological context because it extended into the chora.

The third aspect of the comparative analysis dedicated to the chora and its agricultural land use compares the Stari Grad Plain, Croatia, inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2008 (criteria (ii), (iii) and (v)), a unique example of Greek land allotment of roughly the same period, however the continuous use and maintenance of the division system here has led to the gradual replacement and repair of the division walls, which now often date to medieval times. It also does not have retained the linkage between polis and chora as in the case of Chersonese. Further comparison is made with Cyrene, which only shows traces of a divided chora, Kerkinits and Kalos Limen in Crimea, Ukraine, the chora of which were partly controlled by Chersonese.
and thereby could be considered a further extended chora; Metaponto, in Italy, a colonial Greek site with an extensive chora and others. In the latter example of Metaponta, the division differed as it was established through ditches and canals rather than walls.

The comparative analysis in the nomination dossier did not discuss the selection of the seven serial components as opposed to other sites in the wider chora landscape of Tauric Chersonese. The additional information provided at the request of ICOMOS explained that the selection was based on the sites that had been sufficiently explored and demonstrated an acceptable degree of integrity and preservation. It was acknowledged that other sites of comparable value existed but that these were not yet comprehensively explored and may be added as extensions at a later stage. A comparison to other archaeological sites in the chora was not presented which provides the impression that all known well preserved and well explored sites have been combined for the nomination proposal.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis including the additional information provided at ICOMOS’ request draws on the relevant examples that can be compared to the three categories identified. ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis did not justify Outstanding Universal Value of Tauric Chersonese as a city based on an orthogonal grid system. Yet, ICOMOS considers that the comparison supported that Tauric Chersonese is unique or at least exceptional as a centre of movement of people and acted as an important gateway to the north-eastern parts of the Greek trade influence. ICOMOS also considers that the comparative analysis supports the property’s exceptional characteristics as an extended chora landscape, which retains Greek division walls and farmsteads. However, ICOMOS considers that it has not been sufficiently illustrated how each of the seven proposed components sites contributes to the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, in particular how component seven, Cape Vinogradny, which seems to exclusively relate to later monastic remains, is an exceptional representation of the wider chora landscape. ICOMOS therefore considers that the comparative analysis and the additional information provided has not yet justified the inclusion of this component.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property as a centre of cultural and trade exchange and as an exceptional landscape of a Greek polis and its wider chora. However ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis does not justify the selection of all serial components.

Justification of Outstanding Universal Value

The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- The polis and chora of Tauric Chersonese are an outstanding example of an ancient architectural and technological ensemble, consisting of a city and its agricultural hinterland established as part of Greek colonist activities in the 4th and 3rd century BCE.
- The city of Chersonese preserves exceptional archaeological ruins of an ancient city which was an important political and economic centre in the Northern Black Sea and the layout of which was based on an orthogonal grid system.
- Chersonese’s chora sites continue this orthogonal grid and have retained fragments of a vast land division system of 400 equal allotments in an area of 10,000 hectares.
- Tauric Chersonese is presented as an important political, economic and cultural centre, which played a decisive role in the dissemination of Christianity in south-eastern Europe, particularly in Kievan Rus.

ICOMOS considers that Tauric Chersonese is an exceptional example of an archaeological landscape which combines the archaeological site of a Greek peripheral polis and its extended chora and that this claim to Outstanding Universal Value is justified. ICOMOS further considers that Tauric Chersonese represents in an exceptional manner the cultural and trade exchanges between Greek and Roman Empires and the Crimea as well as the Scythian state. However, ICOMOS considers that the other aspects suggested to be equally outstanding have either not been covered sufficiently in the comparative analysis, as the important role in disseminating Christianity, or have not been fully established such as the typological uniqueness of the urban orthogonal grid and are therefore not justified.

While the serial approach to the representation of this vast chora landscape – partly fragmented by recent developments and infrastructure – is valid in principle, the selection of one of the seven individual components, Cape Vinogradny, has not been justified.

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

The property includes all of the ancient polis of Tauric Chersonese but does not include all of its chora. About half of the chora is lost due to urban development as is well demonstrated in the spatial plan provided. Although only some relatively small parts of what remains have been proposed for inscription and despite the changes of function over time that most of the chora experienced, ICOMOS considers that many key aspects are still retained which enable the perception of the Greek layout and use as well as its adaptation during later centuries. However, similar sites with chora fragments remain in the buffer zone and the State Party mentioned that up to 16 further sites could be nominated as potential extensions in the future.

ICOMOS considers that while the archaeological integrity of the chora landscape does still exist, it is fragile and
threatened by urban and infrastructure development. ICOMOS further considers that the 267 hectares out of at least two thousand hectares of remaining chora landscapes proposed at present can only be seen as a first component of a future wider nomination, which would strengthen the property's integrity in relation to the essential landscape features.

The present seven site components seem to be selected based on the archaeological knowledge available, research and excavation conducted as well as their state of preservation. Yet, not all seven sites relate to the same value context suggested, given that Cape Vinogradny is more significant for its medieval Christian remains than for its features related to the wider chora landscape. It seems that much of the specific Outstanding Universal Value lies in the vastness and regular structure of the extended chora and the preserved ensemble of polis and chora in a shared grid. The delimitation of a significant percentage of the retained chora seems important to ensure integrity which will naturally also contain elements of later periods. Yet, the landscape should not contain components which have no significant remains of the Greek chora. ICOMOS considers that while the present selection, with the exception of Cape Vinogradny, provides a sufficient fragment of the chora landscape, a future expansion of the property to include further chora segments would be desirable and would further strengthen the condition of integrity.

ICOMOS in this context considers that an overview of possible later extensions of the landscape property and its anticipated expansion would be helpful in line of paragraph 139 of the Operational Guidelines, requesting State Parties to inform the World Heritage Committee of their intention, when planning serial nominations over several nomination cycles. ICOMOS notes that in response to its request for additional information, the State Party provided a map which indicates several preserved areas of the Chersonese chora which are not yet included in the property but shall already be subject to equivalent protection status. ICOMOS further considers that an approximate schedule for the research of these potential later components should be foreseen. ICOMOS recommends that also the study of the underwater archaeological components of the port quays should be considered in this research plan.

ICOMOS notes that the impact of urban development on the chora setting is significant and the integrity of the wider landscape is fragile and requires decisive and consistent protection and planning mechanisms to prevent further negative impacts by insensitive urban or infrastructure developments. Likewise, the city of Tauric Chersonese has experienced significant developments of intrusive character, including by a church rebuilt in the year 2000 which now dominates the complete site, the 12th Coastal Battery and a contemporary yacht club.

Authenticity

The ancient city of Tauric Chersonese is fairly well preserved if one disregards the constructions and reconstruction of the church and military batteries in its midst. About 10 of the 40 hectares of the site have been excavated leading to a good understanding of the history and development of the town. No restoration or major conservation projects were conducted with the exception of a few cases of apparent anastylosis. This has retained high degrees of authenticity in material and substance. Authenticity in form and design is in parts well retained in its relations to the urban layout and chora plot division.

The authenticity in setting and location is partly affected, predominantly by the 20th century structures which destroyed parts of the ancient city but also by urban encroachments and infrastructure projects close to the chora sites. ICOMOS recommends to reduce their impact to the extent possible by removing the yacht club and associated structures from its present location and better integrating the cathedral with the archaeological site.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity are partly met and will be strengthened once the impact of 20th century structures on some site components has been reduced, but that both remain vulnerable to urban developments and encroachments.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed

The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (ii), (iv), (v) and (vi).

Criterion (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;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the ancient Greek colony of Chersonese, which also functioned as outpost of the Roman and Byzantine Empires, was point of contact between the Mediterranean civilizations and the “barbarian” populations to the north of the Black Sea. Situated at the crossroads of ancient trade routes, Chersonese was a centre of exchange, not only of trade goods but also of cultural and human values.

ICOMOS considers that Chersonese was indeed a centre of continuous exchange of influences and cross-fertilization between cultures in its function as a trade hub. Compared to other Greek outposts around the Black Sea which fulfilled similar functions in the Hellenisation of Svythian and Sarmatian cultures, Tauric Chersonese stands out for having retained its role as a centre of exchange over a very long time and with continuity over millennia. ICOMOS considers that Chersonese provides an outstanding physical testimony to the exchange that took place between the Greek, Roman and Byzantine Empires and the populations...
north of the Black Sea. However, ICOMOS considers that the adaptation of syncretistic culture, such as the cult of Virgin Parthenos, which may also have potential to reflect these interchanges would need to be further clarified, especially as to how these are evident in the remains of the city and agricultural landscape.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified.

Criterion (iv): be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that Tauric Chersonese is an outstanding urban example of a regular orthogonal city plan, which remained unchanged until the city’s decline in the 15th century. The different archaeological layers reflect the development of the city over the centuries but at the same time the continuity of its urban structure.

ICOMOS considers that Tauric Chersonese is not an outstanding example of an orthogonal city plan as was acknowledged by the State Party in the additional information provided at the request of ICOMOS. The alternative justification referred to in the additional information provided which is focused on the longevity and continuity of the urban plan throughout various subsequent settlements, neither represents an outstanding example of a type nor a significant stage in human history. ICOMOS therefore considers that this justification would be better recognized under criterion (ii) or (v) respectively and shall be discussed under these criteria.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has not been justified.

Criterion (v): be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that Chersonese chora is an outstanding example of an ancient land allocation system, including 400 equal allotments connected to a preserved polis. The remains of the division walls, fortifications, farmsteads and the characteristic grid layout embodied the lifestyles of the city’s inhabitants and illustrate the agricultural use and continuity of the landscape despite later changes in produce.

ICOMOS considers that Tauric Chersonese and its chora represents a relict agricultural landscape with a vast and at locations well-preserved land allotment system, which remains legible despite later changes in land use. It is an outstanding example of democratic land organization linked to an ancient polis, reflecting the social organization within the city.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified.

Criterion (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;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that Tauric Chersonese is directly associated with important historic events that took place in the area, in particular its role played in the dissemination of Christianity in south-eastern Europe, such as among Alani, Goths and East Slavs as well as Kievan Rus in the 10th century.

ICOMOS considers that Chersonese contained remarkable medieval remains preserving whole houses, chapels and shops illustrating early medieval life in the city. However, it has not been demonstrated how these remains could be considered testimony to its role in Christianization of south-eastern Europe, nor has the comparative analysis considered other early Christian centres and their role in the dissemination of Christianity. ICOMOS considers that this criterion would require further evidence to be justified.

ICOMOS further considers that Chersonese’s prominent role in ancient Greek mythology may provide justification for the use of this criterion, but that further clarification on the relation to the preserved physical remains as well as comparative analysis would be necessary to demonstrate such association.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has not yet been justified.

ICOMOS considers that the serial approach is justified in principle but that the selection of sites should be further extended in the future to better reflect the landscape values of the archaeological chora.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets the conditions of integrity and authenticity and criteria (ii) and (v). However, the conditions of integrity and authenticity remain vulnerable to urban development.

4 Factors affecting the property

An important environmental pressure to the property is shore erosion to which its limestone cliffs are highly susceptible and which already led to the erosion of part of the historic city. The State Party has shown good progress in responding to this challenge by recording the status quo and is currently developing a variety of options for shore protection. Especially component part seven poses real
risks of landslides and accessing the property is highly dangerous at present.

Visitor access to all of the component sites including the main excavation area of the city is currently unrestricted and since it is an important access route for the local population to reach the beaches, any restriction of local passage would be very unpopular. The impact on the property as result of this passage activity seems limited and to the management authorities is preferable to alienating the local population. However, ICOMOS considers that there is a lack of guards on site who could prevent inappropriate visitor behaviour if such occurred. The same lack of control applies to the chora property components which do not seem to have any site-based personnel to control access and use. Access limitation does not seem feasible at present but clear delimitation may be able to create raised awareness for the sites – sometimes perceived as wasteland – and their significance.

The property has in the past been and will continue to be affected by urban development, as the city of Sevastopol is located at very close distance to the archaeological sites and continues expanding. This is a particularly critical factor as it may negatively impact the already fragile integrity of the archaeological landscape. Much work has been dedicated to integrating the archaeological landscape into the wider land-use and protection system, however at present protection is restricted to the site components proposed, indicated as protected areas, and some surrounding areas indicated as landscape protection zones. Although according to the additional information provided efforts are underway to expand and strengthen the protective system, the present protection in place is not yet fully supportive in safeguarding the archaeological resources (see protection).

Some of the chora sites continue to be used for cattle grazing and small scale agriculture by the local population. Although agricultural activities are strictly prohibited the lack of staff on site or security services make these activities difficult to control. In the category of natural disasters seismic activities are relevant and Tauric Chersonese lies in a high activity seismic zone. The fragile substance of especially the archaeological remains of the city is likely to suffer major damages in the event of an earthquake.

ICOMOS considers that the main threats to the property are urban development, earthquakes, illegal agricultural activities, shore erosion and landslides.

5 Protection, conservation and management

Boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone

The boundaries of component parts one and seven are determined by clear physical boundaries or visible archaeological features. However, ICOMOS considers that the existence of port quays and underwater archaeological features is known in the bay and that the underwater archaeological components should in the future be included in the property boundaries. ICOMOS notes that according to the State Party the knowledge on the exact underwater features is said to not be sufficient to justify Outstanding Universal Value at this moment and recommends that underwater archaeological surveys be given priority to gain better knowledge of these elements and their significance. ICOMOS therefore recommends to consider extending the component one to also include the port bay of Tauric Chersonese once the survey has been conducted.

In contrast to serial components one and seven, the boundaries drawn around the other components are artificial and solely determined by the extend of the protection status which is related to state land ownership. It is intended to add further 16 areas to the property in the future as soon as the land has been acquired. However, ICOMOS considers that it is not clear at present how the values present in these additional parts would relate to the already proposed parts in constituting the Outstanding Universal Value of the property. Intact parts of the chora extend beyond the currently proposed boundaries and apparently significant features are excluded because they are situated on yet private lands. Inclusion of these features would ensure that the relict landscape of the Chersonese Chora could be protected in its larger context and ICOMOS recommends to give highest priority to expanding the property to include these, if necessary even before the land acquisition processes have been finalized.

Following the expansion of the property, the buffer zone would need to be revised accordingly to ensure future protection, especially from urban development, of all property components. ICOMOS recommends to – as much as possible – join the distinct buffer zone areas of the serial components towards a shared buffer zone covering the wider setting of the landscape components.

ICOMOS considers that the boundaries of the nominated property comprise the minimum necessary elements to express the Outstanding Universal Value but need to be expanded in the future to represent all features of the wider chora landscape and that its buffer zone is at present adequate but will require future expansion accordingly.

Ownership

All serial component sites proposed in the nomination dossier are owned by the state. The authority responsible for their administration and management is the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine, which mandated parts of this responsibility to the Tauric Chersonese National Preserve to conduct and supervise the management processes on a daily basis.

Protection

The serial components proposed enjoy the highest level of national protection according to the Law of Ukraine on
Cultural Heritage Protection (No. 2518-VI of 9 September 2010). This status prohibits any activities within the boundaries that may have any negative impact on the state of preservation, or use of any cultural heritage sites and designated monuments. The different components were separately designated as national historic sites, starting with the ancient city of Chersonese in 1999 and most recently the chora site at the Yukharina Gully in July 2010. A particular challenge in the designations however is the current discrepancy between the site extensions registered in the national protection system and those recognized in the local planning documents, which shall be resolved in the finalized Master Development Plan for the city of Sevastopol.

In the additional information provided on 28 February 2013 the State introduced a project launched in 2012 under the title “Boundaries and land use regimes for the protected areas of the monuments of the Tauric Chersonese National Preserve located on the territory of the Heraclean Peninsula in the City of Sevastopol.” This project aims at revising the site boundaries in the current Master Development Plan through a more sophisticated zoning and protection concept which creates seven different levels of protection zones. However, the project is yet to be officially approved and shall be integrated in the Master Development Plan following its official adoption. The draft plan presented also offers protection for areas of the extended chora which may have potential for future property extensions. ICOMOS recommends to officially adopt the project at an early opportunity and integrate its zoning proposals into the municipal zoning plan.

With regard to the buffer zone, the Ukrainian law makes a distinction between buffer zones and landscape protection zones. While the first regulates future developments the latter completely prohibits developments. Those parts of the buffer zone which have been designated as landscape protection zone are accordingly well protected but difficulties arise within the present system according to which building permission are granted in the buffer zone. These are approved or refused based on their visual impacts but impacts on potential unexcavated archaeological remains are not considered in the planning process. Thus constructions could severely affect chora features, which are already known to be located in the buffer zone and are earmarked for potential future extensions. The new system presented in the additional information received would also respond to these shortcomings and provide an adequate protection status to all parts of the buffer zone.

ICOMOS considers that the legal protection in place for the serial site components is sufficient but that the current protection of the buffer zone is not. The recommendations for seven zoning and protection levels developed in the “Boundaries and land use regimes for the protected areas” project should be formally adopted and integrated into the Master Development Plan.

Conservation
Systematic archaeological excavations by the Russian government started in the mid 19th century and in nearly two centuries ca. 10 hectares of the archaeological remains have been explored. Very few of the excavated remains underwent systematic conservation. As a result of extreme climatic conditions, especially in winter, most of the exposed walls and structures are in urgent need of conservation and stabilization measures, some of these may even be close to collapse or disintegration. The same situation applies to the sites in the chora on which only limited prior conservation works were carried out.

ICOMOS considers conservation issues on site are well understood and capable staff is available to respond to these challenges. The outlines of an adequate conservation plan are part of the management plan submitted. However, although financial support for this work has recently increased, in relation to the tasks at hand, the budgetary commitment is still too limited.

Ongoing excavations are a source of concern and plans with priority areas for archaeological research provide for future excavations of up to 50% of the area. Apart from the potential effects on the fragile integrity of the property, future excavations would also further increase the need for conservation. However, in the absence of an “overall problem-oriented research policy” as is pointed out in the management plan, ICOMOS recommends to take a cautious approach to further excavations and give clear priority to conservation efforts until the most urgent challenges are sufficiently responded to. ICOMOS further considers that non-destructive remote sensing techniques can provide good alternatives to gain a better understanding of the extend and significance of further chora components.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the need for conservation is an essential challenge for the property and that many archaeological structures seem very fragile. Clear priority and adequate budgetary resources should therefore be given to conservation measures.

Management

Management structures and processes, including traditional management processes

The authority responsible for the management of the property is the Tauric Chersonese National Preserve which was mandated as the management agency by the Ministry of Culture. The structure of the preserve administration has recently been streamlined, with several Deputy-Director positions removed, and some new and important positions introduced including one for an underwater archaeologist, a post for public outreach and awareness raising programmes and a number of security personnel. The staff of the conservation department is well qualified and is currently conducting treatment tests to finalize strategies for an encompassing programme for conservation research and measures.
As the agency is responsible for all serial components alike, an overall management approach and authority for the serial components exists. The Ministry of Culture provides an annual budget for the preserve and all income the preserve generates stays available for its management activities and conservation. However, these funds are not sufficient for the conservation challenges the property faces and cannot cover the necessary one time investments such as for physical demarcation of the site boundaries. ICOMOS considers that clear budgetary priorities need to be given to conservation rather than interpretation and tourism projects.

A risk management plan with emergency measures to control costal erosion and landslides is being planned. ICOMOS recommends to monitor visitor safety and at the very least put up warning signs at Cape Vinogradny and other areas affected by shore erosion and land slides until emergency measures have been carried out.

Policy framework: management plans and arrangements, including visitor management and presentation

The management plan submitted with the nomination dossier is provisional and guides the preparation of a finalized management plan, which is supposed to be completed and adopted in March 2013. The site management agency is conscious of the shortcomings of the draft plan which are being responded to in the forthcoming revision. ICOMOS recommends to continue the constructive work on the revision and finalization of the management plan within the anticipated time frame. Good progress has recently been made in initiating shore protection measures by stabilizing hollow cliffs and the preventive monitoring programme. Little progress however has so far been achieved in reducing the impact of the 20th century additions to the serial component one, in particular the yacht club or in seeking better cooperation with and integration of the cathedral and its administration.

Various signs in the city of Chersonese provide visitors further explanation on the archaeological remains and different methods of conservation approaches have been tried to make ruins more self-explanatory. In other site components the available levels of interpretation are considerably less. It is evident that the Preserve has sufficient expertise to upgrade the overall interpretation and presentation and that this initiative will be integrated in the revised management plan. The State Party is further planning to construct a visitor centre at component part two for which first sketches have been submitted and final designs are said to be sent to UNESCO and ICOMOS for further consultations. While ICOMOS agrees that the component site two would benefit from future interpretative facilities, ICOMOS recommends to focus available funding with priority on the necessary conservation measures.

Involvement of the local communities

Community involvement is not directly addressed in the nomination and in ICOMOS’ view there seems to be a likely lack in stakeholder involvement. The new director of the Preserve is the former major of Sevastopol and therefore good cooperation probably exists with the City, but local citizens seem neither involved in nor informed of the World Heritage nomination. ICOMOS considers that the property management would benefit from a more participatory approach.

ICOMOS considers that the revised management plan which is currently being prepared should be finalized and adopted, and that management priority should be given to conservation needs. ICOMOS further considers that the staff capacity at the management agency is adequate but recommends that budgetary resources need to be increased to respond to the urgent conservation and security challenges.

6 Monitoring

The monitoring indicators provided identify key areas of monitoring, such as the state of the archaeological remains, research methodologies, natural and anthropogenic risk factors and effectiveness of protection, including the periodicity, in which these should be reviewed and the location, in which the records are held. ICOMOS considers that the themes identified are essential in monitoring but that monitoring processes would benefit from more specific indicators to allow judgements on the changes and conditions of the various aspects identified. ICOMOS therefore recommends to develop more specific indicators during the forthcoming monitoring exercises which can provide future references for judgement.

ICOMOS considers that while the monitoring system presented is sufficient, more specific indicators could still be developed during forthcoming monitoring exercises to allow for better anticipation of threats or challenges and more adequate references in monitoring of the property.

7 Conclusions

ICOMOS considers that Tauric Chersonese is an outstanding example of an archaeological landscape which combines a peripheral polis and trade outpost with an extended chora, which was divided into over 400 allotments of equal size. ICOMOS considers that the site’s Outstanding Universal Value has been demonstrated according to criteria (ii) and (v).

ICOMOS considers that while the serial approach to the representation of this vast chora landscape – partly fragmented by recent developments and infrastructure – is valid in principle, the selection of the seven individual components does only present part of a much larger chora landscape. ICOMOS recommends that areas currently located in the proposed buffer zone, which contain comparable archaeological remains and clear references to the chora plot division, should be included
in the property in future extensions and that in this context the individual component sites may need to be combined to larger landscape components. ICOMOS further considers that component no. 7, Cape Vinogradny, does not significantly contribute to the Outstanding Universal Value and should be excluded.

ICOMOS considers that the current selection presented contains the minimum elements necessary to meet the condition of integrity and that authenticity of the ancient city is partly met, but affected by the structures built in the 20th century. However, ICOMOS considers that the integrity of the wider archaeological landscape remains very fragile and threatened by urban development. In ICOMOS view authenticity could be strengthened by reducing the impacts of the structures added in the 20th century through relocating the yacht club and better integrating the cathedral within the overall property.

ICOMOS considers that the key threats to the property are posed by urban development, earthquakes, illegal agricultural activities, shore erosion and landslides. The later at present pose severe security concerns and ICOMOS recommends that warning signs should be placed at high risk locations to avoid loss of life. ICOMOS considers that the impact of urban development on the chora and its wider setting is significant and the integrity of the wider landscape requires decisive and consistent protection and planning mechanisms to prevent further negative impacts.

The serial components proposed enjoy the highest level of national protection but discrepancies between national and local boundary definitions need to be resolved. The State Party has developed a project for the revision of the zoning and protection scheme which is yet to be officially adopted. ICOMOS recommends the adoption of the boundary project according to the draft schemes provided in the additional information and to integrate these new zones into the Development Master Plan.

ICOMOS considers that the core priority for Tauric Chersonese is conservation as many of the exposed walls and structures are in urgent need of stabilization measures and some may even be close to collapse or disintegration. Although future excavation plans are said to be initially focused on re-excavation of previously excavated areas for conservation, ICOMOS recommends to take a cautious approach to excavations and give clear priority to conservation efforts until the most urgent challenges are responded to, in light of the potential effects excavations might have on the fragile integrity of the property. ICOMOS commends the Basic Principles provided in this context.

ICOMOS considers that the human resources of the management authority are adequate but that the financial resources are too limited to respond to the conservation challenges the property faces and cannot cover necessary one time investments such as warning signage and demarcation of boundaries. ICOMOS considers that clear budgetary priorities need to be given to conservation rather than interpretation and tourism projects. ICOMOS also considers that the property management would benefit from a more participatory approach.

8 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that Ancient City of Tauric Chersonese and its Chora, Ukraine, with the exception of serial component no. 7 Cape Vinogradny, be inscribed on the World Heritage List as a cultural landscape on the basis of criteria (ii) and (v).

Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Brief synthesis

Tauric Chersonese and its chora are the remains of an ancient city, founded in the 5th century BCE as a colonial settlement of the Dorian Greeks, located on the Heraclean Peninsula in south-west Crimea. The polis and extended chora of Tauric Chersonese form an outstanding example of an ancient cultural landscape, consisting of a Greek polis and its agricultural hinterland established as part of colonist activities in the 4th and 3rd century BCE. The significant archaeological ruins of the city retain physical remains constructed between the 5th century BCE and the 13th century AD laid out on an orthogonal grid system. The basic orientation of this orthogonal grid continues into the wider landscape where fragments of a vast land demarcation system of 400 equal allotments in an area of 10,000 hectares have been preserved.

The Ancient City of Tauric Chersonese and its chora is an exceptional example of a peripheral centre of movement of people which acted as an important gateway to the north-eastern parts of the Greek trade influence, including the Crimea and the Scythian state. The city maintained its strategic role over almost two millennia and provides a unique example for the continuity and longevity of a mercantile outpost connecting the different Black Sea trade routes.

Criterion (ii): Tauric Chersonese provides an outstanding physical testimony to the exchange that took place between the Greek, Roman and Byzantine Empires and the populations north of the Black Sea. The polis and its chora stand out for having retained this role as a centre of exchange of influences and cross-fertilization between these cultures for a very long time and with continuity over millennia.

Criterion (v): Tauric Chersonese and its chora represents a relict agricultural landscape of a vast and at locations well-preserved land allotment system, of formerly over 400 equal allotments connected to a preserved polis. The remains of the division walls, fortifications, farmsteads and the characteristic grid layout embodied the lifestyles of the city’s inhabitants.
and illustrate the agricultural use and continuity of the landscape despite later changes in produce.

Integrity
The six property components include the complete ancient polis of Tauric Chersonese as well as fragments of its chora. About half of the chora has been lost due to urban development and yet, only small parts of what remains have been inscribed. This selection provides a sufficient fragment of the chora landscape, but a future expansion of the property to include further chora segments would be desirable and would further strengthen the integrity of the property.

The impact of urban development on the chora setting is significant and the integrity of the wider landscape is fragile and requires decisive and consistent protection and planning mechanisms to prevent further negative impacts by insensitive urban or infrastructure developments. Likewise, the city of Tauric Chersonese has experienced significant developments of intrusive character, some of which have been committed to be relocated.

Authenticity
The condition of authenticity in material, design and substance is good for the archaeological remains of the polis and the chora. About 10 of the 40 hectares of the site of Tauric Chersonese have been excavated leading to a good understanding of the history and development of the town. Less excavations have taken place in the chora but its structure and layout is nevertheless well understood. No major restoration or conservation projects were carried out with the exception of a few cases of anastylosis. This has retained high degrees of authenticity in material and substance. Authenticity in form and design is well retained in its relations to the urban layout and chora plot division.

The authenticity in setting and location is partly affected, predominantly by the 20th century constructions which destroyed parts of the ancient city but also by urban encroachments and infrastructure projects close to the chora sites. Their impact could be reduced to the extent possible by removing the yacht club and associated structures from its present location and better integrating the cathedral within the archaeological site.

Management and protection requirements
The property enjoys the highest level of national protection according to the Law of Ukraine on Cultural Heritage Protection (No. 2518-VI of 9 September 2010). This status prohibits any activities within the boundaries that may have any negative impact on the state of preservation, or use of any cultural heritage sites and designated monuments. A recently launched project entitled “Boundaries and land use regimes for the protected areas of the monuments of the Tauric Chersonese National Preserve located on the territory of the Heraclean Peninsula in the City of Sevastopol” aims at integrating a more sophisticated zoning and protection concept in the Master Development Plan, which would strengthen the protection status of the extended chora landscape. The official adoption of the draft plan should be given priority.

The authority responsible for the property is the Tauric Chersonese National Preserve which was mandated as the management agency by the Ministry of Culture. Key protection challenges of the property are erosion, in particular shore erosion, the establishment of adequate security measures on all site components and urban development. Urban development has in the past been and will continue to be a key risk as the city of Sevastopol is located at very close distance to the archaeological sites and continues to grow. Inappropriate urban expansions will negatively impact the already fragile integrity of the archaeological landscape. Important works are underway to integrate the archaeological landscape into the wider land-use and protection system. These have to be finalized to cover a wider area beyond the presently designated protected areas and landscape protection zones. Future inclusion of these features through boundary extensions of the property would ensure that the relict landscape of the Chersonese chora could be protected in its larger context.

A revised management plan which is to be finalized in mid 2013 should be officially adopted and management priority should be given to conservation needs. In view of the critical state of conservation of the ruins in the city of Tauric Chersonese, some of which are highly dilapidated or even close to collapse, budgetary resources need to be increased to respond to the urgent conservation and security challenges. Clear budgetary priority needs to be given to conservation and visitor security rather than interpretation and other tourism projects.

Additional recommendations
ICOMOS recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

- Finalizing and officially adopting the management plan including interpretation, visitor and risk management strategies;
- Approving the project for the revision of boundaries and land use regimes and integrate the protection zones proposed in the municipal zoning and Development Master Plan;
- Launching immediate conservation and stabilization measures for the most fragile section of exposed archaeological remains to prevent collapses and disintegration;
- Attributing adequate financial resources for a medium-term conservation programme and management of the site;
- Developing a schedule and plan for the relocation of the yacht club and a cooperation plan with the church authorities aimed at better integrating the use and activities of the church within the archaeological site;
• Providing an overview of possible later extensions of the landscape property and its anticipated expansion in line with paragraph 139 of the Operational Guidelines;

• Surveying the wider chora landscape with help of non-destructive remote sensing techniques to gain a better understanding of the extension and significance of further chora components;

• Initiating underwater archaeological surveys of the port bay of Tauric Chersonese to gain better knowledge about the extension and significance of the quay structures;

• Submitting, by 1 February 2015, a report to the World Heritage Centre outlining progress made in the implementation of the demands and abovementioned recommendations to be examined by the World Heritage Committee at its 39th session in 2015.

ICOMOS encourages to call upon States Parties to provide international cooperation to assist in financing the most urgent conservation requirements.
Map showing the boundaries of the nominated properties
Aerial view of the ancient city of Tauric Chersonese

Farmstead in the chora plot at Yukharina Gully
Defensive tower in the chora plot in Berman's Gully

Fortifications in the chora plot on the Bezymyannaya Height

Remains of vineyard planting in the chora plot in the Streletska Gully
Fragment of defensive wall in the chora plot on the isthmus of the Mayachny Peninsula

Church in the chora plot on Cape Vinogradny