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United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Report of a mission to Ephesus, Pamukkale and Hagia Sophia (5-8 March 1998)

by
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At the invitation of the Turkish authorities, I have undertaken a visit to the sites of Ephesus, Pamukkale (Hierapolis) and to the monument of Hagia Sophia in Istanbul. The visit was organized by the Turkish Delegation at UNESCO and the Ministry of Culture.

The visit has been very well organized and has produced positive results. I have been impressed by the dedication and kindness of all the national staff I have met and worked with and I would like to extend to them here my most sincere thanks. More particularly, I would like to thank Mrs. Emel Örgen (Director, Department of Archaeological Excavations, Ministry of Culture) who has accompanied me throughout my visit and Mr. Ender Varinlioglu (Director General of Museums and Sites, Ministry of Culture) who travelled from Ankara to Istanbul to meet me on Saturday 4 March. The schedule of the visit and the list of persons met are provided in Annexes 1 and 2.

1. Ephesus

1.1 The Roman city

The site of the Roman city of Ephesus is well protected and preserved. Visited by around 1,5 million tourists per year, it suffers from the usual problems encountered in similar sites around the Mediterranean.

Excavations are continuing by teams of Austrian archaeologists who have a thorough knowledge of the site acquired through a long history of excavations in Ephesus. National teams are working as well on the site which is well protected. The Director of the site however - and I share his opinion - considers it advisable to begin **giving more attention to protection, conservation, documentation and display of the results**. This requires additional funding and resources from the central authorities. Improvements are expected to take place in the protection and display of the Terrasse Houses located on the hill south of the Library.

This is better understood when one visits the site and sees the groups of tourists following the same circuit : from Gate of Magnesia down to the Library and the Theatre, then the exit next to the Gymnasium by the Harbour street, while there could be much more to see. **Well documented alternative courses of visits, better visitors' documentation (brochures, maps, audio-visuels, maquettes) on Ephesus would improve the quality of the visits and contribute to a better conservation of the ruins.**

Concurrently, entrance facilities can be improved at the main gate to the ruins, the Door of Magnesia. The parking space should be moved further away from the gate to reconstitute the physical connection between the isolated ruins behind the parking and the City gate. A better display of the small shops located around the road and their possible relocation next to the new parking space with a vegetation cover would improve the physical aspect of the entrance.

Most of the tourists visit particularly the Roman Ephesus and follow a very precise circuit; the other sites of Ephesus (Artemise's Temple, Saint-John's Basilica, the Seljuk Castle,...) are much less visited. **An introduction display to the sites of Ephesus - already presented above - in the form of panels, photographs, maquettes and audio-visuels, 3-D reconstruction of the site,** can be judiciously located in the Museum premises where visitors could begin their discovery and then proceed to the various sites. This idea, shared with the authorities, deserves to be studied : the authorities might wish to request the support of the Participation Programme to this end.

2. Pamukkale (Hierapolis)

The Centre had received in the past several complaints about **the degradation of the travertine concretions** caused by the excessive use of the thermal springs for pools used by tourists. This site however suffers from other threats, some of which are presented hereafter.

There were **five hotels within the inscribed zone**, a fragile natural and cultural site with no appropriate management structure¹. This year, the Government has expropriated three hotels and it is expected that before the end of 1998, the two remaining ones will be expropriated as well.

Intensive in-site circulation of buses and private cars and parking spaces within the zone creates nuisance and pollution; it also prevents a proper display of the site. Two entry points have been established with parking spaces, ticketing offices and selling booths; it is expected that all circulation will be forbidden inside the site very soon.

¹ Taking into consideration the fragility of this site, the Government had already prepared in 1992 a Preservation and Development Plan.

The presence of Gendarmerie and Police barracks within the site has certainly helped in the protection of its natural and cultural elements. Once all the hotels will have been expropriated and the new gates to the site will have become operational, these barracks must be removed and located outside the protected area. The same applies to the **shops**.

The travertines were not adequately protected and have turned grey. This is being corrected and the travertines are turning white again in several places. However walking of the travertines remains to be totally forbidden. The pedestrian path which crosses through the travertines - up from the village to the site has been closed and new channels in place of the damaged water channels from the thermal springs to the travertines have been constructed. However, more effective control must be exerted on visitors who wish to walk on the travertines.

Some monumental archaeological structures are in danger of collapsing and the display of the remains is still to be done properly. The Italian team which is working on the archaeology of the site has achieved important results and has placed information metallic plates along the site. This needs to be integrated in an overall approach to visits of the site. I have also had the opportunity to visit an impressive excavation conducted by the team of the Museum within the Roman baths and to see the restauration works conducted on part of the roman city-wall. All these works need to be documented, published and displayed for visits.

There is a clear evidence of **lack of day-to-day maintenance of the site.** Used plastic bottles and other litter are scattered along the site.

The museum stores a number of important archaeological objects worth being adequately displayed. The building is spacious enough to enable the regular organization of exhibitions and of the presentation of the history of Pamukkale.

There appears to be a lack of coordination within the team of the Museum as well as between the various actors intervening on the site. This reacts negatively on the rehabilitation process of the travertines and on the overall management of the site. The newly appointed Governor of Denizli region has entrusted his Deputy Governor with the priority task of looking after the site of Pamukkale and coordinating the various inputs in the rehabilitation of the site. A workshop can be held with the participation of national and international scientists to prepare an action plan for the project of arranging the environment surrounding Pamukkale, expected to be launched in 1999. On the other hand, I have been informed that a series of measures have already taken place within the Pamukkale Preservation and Development Plan of 1992 (see Annex 3).

Meanwhile, there needs to be an **urgent reinforcement of the coordination and management capacities.** A first measure to help the team of the Museum would be to provide them with the means to acquire, store and use information which is useful for their work : **a small documentation centre** containing copies of all the studies, publications of excavations, research on the water system, etc. With an Internet connection would be most useful. The authorities have approved the idea and might submit a request for financial support from the World Heritage Fund.

3. Hagia Sophia (and the Central Conservation and Restoration Laboratory)

3.1. Recommendations of the 1993 mission

In 1993, a mission of specialists and consultants from UNESCO visited Hagia Sophia and formulated recommendations for its preservation and restoration. The findings of this mission were discussed again during my visit with the Director General of Museums and Museums of the Ministry of Culture, the Director of the Central Laboratory, the Director of Hagia Sophia Museum and the team in charge of the restoration of the mosaics. Recommendations, actions taken so far, and proposals for further action (with priorities) are presented hereafter (text of 1993 recommendations is in italics).

In relation to responsibilities and administration :

1) *that recognition should continue to be given by the Turkish authorities to the importance of Hagia Sophia in the world architectural heritage;*

The Ministry of Culture has requested for 1998 a special budgetary allocation of 125 billion Turkish Liras (i.e. around US\$ 540,000) for Hagia Sophia². **In view of the amount of restoration and protection works needed, it would be advisable that this special allocation becomes an annual budgetary item.**

2) *that in view of this importance and the special problems presented, it would be wrong to entrust the investigation of conservation and restoration needs and the planning of desirable works to a contractor, however enthusiastic and competent he is in his own field;*

The authorities have agreed to this approach. **There is however a need to reinforce the capacity of the Museum of Hagia Sophia in the supervision and control of investigations and works carried out in Hagia Sophia.**

3) *that, as has been suggested by Turkish colleagues, there should be a new body ("Institute") reporting directly to the Director General of Monuments and Museums to undertake these responsibilities, and more generally, to be fully responsible for the monument with the assistance of an enlarged Consultants' Committee;*

4) *that full use should also continue to be made of internationally recognized experts to advise on major decisions on specific problems that lie outside present Turkish experience;*

The idea of an Institute had been rejected by the authorities, the Museum of Hagia Sophia acting as such. However, as I have come to understand, no established team of "international and national consultants" has been created. **In view of the international importance of the monument and of the magnitude and diversity of the work to be undertaken, such a team of**

² With other donations, the amount allocated in 1998 for restoration and protection is about 200 billion Turkish Liras (around US\$ 800,000).

international and national consultants is highly desirable, on the one hand to provide advice at regular intervals and, on the other, to help streamline the various interventions under way or offered on Hagia Sophia.

In relation to investigations and works of conservation or restoration :

5) *that no action should be taken on the works tentatively suggested by Net Yapi and others until they have been more fully considered;*

There has been no contract awarded to a private contractor since the visit of the 1993 mission and its recommendations on this issue have been accepted.

6) *that there is no evidence of immediate risk to the structure but that there should be a full appraisal of what is now known about it followed by further investigations and monitoring to serve as a basis for considering possible strengthening measures and realistically analysing their effects on the response to possible future earthquakes;*

Several studies/investigations have been or are still being conducted. **Reports of such works must however be transmitted to the Museum who should act as a coordinator of the works and of the documentation.**

7) *that there is an urgent need for the repair/renewal of the lead covering of the vaults and for its future maintenance;*

This has been done. while visiting the roofs, it was noticed that some repairs need to take place on the wooden and concrete frames and glass of some windows.

8) *that there is a need for the cleaning and consolidation of much of the internal mosaics decoration and marble revetment and some making good of losses, and for the formulation, with advice from recognized experts, of an overall policy to guide this work;*

In four years, despite limited resources and staff the Central Laboratory team has managed to undertake a very impressive work on the mosaics of the dome. One fourth is now restored and it is to be expected that, with the experience gained, the restoration of the remaining will be done more rapidly. **The Central Laboratory needs more staff for the mosaics : it is recommended that detachment of foreign personnel and/or the recruitment of additional junior restorers be considered.**

9) *that, in relation to both 7) and 8) there is a need for further study of moisture movements and condensation and their effects with the objective of reducing damage to materials and finishes;*

Studies on humidity in the monument are under way but there is no coordination of the work. **Concurrently, it is desirable to study the impact of the increase of visitors on the level of humidity and to devise temporary**

measures for the circulation of air in the monument (opening of the lateral doors and windows, repairs of the clay ducts in the dome, etc.).

10) *that, before other developments make it too difficult, some further excavations should be undertaken to add to our knowledge of the history of the monument, or its ancillary structures, and of its predecessors on the site;*

11) *that the findings, both of these excavations and of all other investigations, should be fully and centrally recorded, preferably on a data base of all previous observations and measurements.*

Here again, centralization of the studies and reports and their analysis must be entrusted to the Museum which must establish a documentation unit.

3.2. Further recommendations

A consensus was reached in a meeting held at the end of the visit on the **priority needs for cooperation in favour of the preservation and restoration of Hagia Sophia**, based on the results achieved since the 1993 mission. These needs are as follows, by order of priority :

- a) **improving the management and coordination capacities of the Museum :** documentation, small repairs and maintenance workshop and personnel (carpentry, masonry, electricity, etc.);
- b) completion of the works on the **external protection of the monument** (walls, windows, roofing, ...);
- c) **reinforcing the Central Laboratory** by trained staff and equipment (priority here should be given to the team responsible for the restoration of the mosaics);
- d) preparation of a **State of the Art report on the situation of the monument** based on the studies undertaken and under way (a three days seminar on archaeology, structure, humidity and restoration works, to reach a global integrated view of the situation);
- e) **improved management of the flows of tourists** (entrance fee is doubling soon).

3.3. Future Cooperation

Since 1992, the World Heritage Fund contributed to the preservation and restoration of Hagia Sophia by an amount of US\$ 210,000 through the Central Laboratory. The scope of the work which remains to be done and the experience of the past years amply justify a better planned and more ambitious course of action in which a pooling of partners around the authorities and UNESCO has to be prepared. In this perspective, the Turkish National Committee of ICOMOS could be of great help.

A programme and plan of action for the integral protection, preservation and management of Hagia Sophia is urgently needed. This could best take place after the state of the art report on Hagia Sophia has been prepared and the seminar held (see above 3.2 - d). Prior to the seminar, the international and national consultants' committee needs to be created.

Once this is done, **financial and human resources must be sought** : the Government for its part needs to increase its financial involvement (see 3.1 - 1), provide the Museum with the institutional, regulatory and human requirements needed to perform the work.

International cooperation can then be arranged with the help of UNESCO, on the basis of the contents of the programme and plan.

Annex 1 - Schedule of the mission

Thursday 5 March

05:20 Departure from Beirut
07:20 Arrival in Istanbul, met at airport by Mrs Örgen
09:25 Departure to Izmir
12:00 - 13:30 First meeting with the Director of Ephesus Museum
13:30 - 14:30 Lunch
14:30 - 15:00 Visit of Meryem Ana
15:00 - 18:00 Visit of Ephesus
18:00 - 21:30 Discussions and dinner with the Museum Director

Friday 6 March

08:00 - 08:30 Visit of St. John's Basilica
08:30 - 09:00 Visit of the entrance gate to Ephesus : Door of Magnesia
09:00 Departure to Pamukkale
10:30 - 11:00 Visit, on the road, of Nyssa
12:00 Arrival to Pamukkale
12:00 - 13:00 First visit of the site
13:00 - 15:00 Lunch with the team of the site and discussions
15:00 - 16:00 Visit to the Wali of Denizli Region
16:00 - 18:30 Visit of the site and discussions with the team
18:30 Departure to airport
21:30 Arrival in Istanbul

Saturday 7 March

08:30 - 09:30 Meeting with the President of ICOMOS-Turkey
10:00 - 11:00 Meeting with the Director General of the Ministry of Culture and the Director of the Central Conservation and Restauration Laboratory; visit of the Laboratory and meeting with the Staff
11:00 - 13:00 Visit of Hagia Sophia with all the restauration team and the Director of the Museum
13:00 - 14:30 Lunch
14:30 - 17:00 Visit of Hagia Sophia
17:00 - 18:00 Meeting with the Director of the Museum and the Director General of the Ministry of Culture : Wrap-up session
19:30 Dinner

Sunday 8 March

09:20 Departure for Paris

Annex 2 - List of persons met during the mission

Ministry of Culture (Ankara)

Mr. Ender Varinliogly,
Director General of Monuments and Museums,

Mrs. Emel Örgen,
Director, Archaeological Excavations

Ephesus

Mr. Selahattin Erdemgil
Director, Museum of Ephesus

Pamukkale

Mr. Yusuf Ziya Göksu
Vali (Governor)
Denizli

Mr. Hasan Huseyn Çan
Deputy Governor
Denizli

Mr. Ali Çeylan
Deputy Director, Museum of Pamukkale

The Director of Tourism of Pamukkale

The Director of Culture of Pamukkale

Hagia Sophia

Mrs. Ülkü Izmiriligil,
Director, Central Restoration and Conservation Laboratory
Istanbul

Mr. Ali Kiliçkaya
Director,
AyaSofia Museum,
Istanbul

ICOMOS - Turkey

Mr. Nevzat Ihlán
President

Paris, 19 June 1998

A. Achievements since adoption of the Pamukkale Preservation and Development Plan of 1992.

a) As of 31st of March 1998 three of the five hotels in the inscribed zone has been expropriated.

b) The roadway crossing through the travertines has been closed. A new road has been built and new travertine is cultivated in the area where the old road was once situated.

c) Visitors Reception Centers have been constructed at the northern and southern entrances to control entry and exit to Ören district.

d) The International Karst Water Resources Research Center of Hacettepe University has studied the causes of the degradation and disappearance of thermal water springs. Furthermore through these studies protection and development zones for the travertines have been ascertained.

e) The damaged water channels reaching the travertines from the thermal springs have been reconstructed.

f) The travertine zones have been widened in accordance with the plan.

g) Walking on the travertines have been prohibited with the decision of the Governate dated 15 May 1997.

h) Photogrammetric documentation of monumental and cultural structures have been completed.

1) Excavations on Southern Necropolis, Northern Tripolis path and Roman Bath have been realized.

i) The Southern Byzantine Gate and path have been restored.

j) Restoration of Southern City walls continues.

k) The Project of collective transportation to Ören district and the pedestrian path has been completed.

B. Plans for the future

a) The preparations for an environmental reorganisation project is underway.

b) Northern and Southern Visitors Reception Centres whose infrastructure has been completed, will be put to service in 1998 and the motor traffic to Ören district will be completely closed.

c) The decision dated 18.3.1998, No: 7565 by the Council for the Protection of Cultural & Natural Properties for İzmir foresees :

✓ -the banning of touristic activities of Koru Hotel and stopping the thermal water supplies to it.

✓ - the swift expropriation of this and the other remaining hotel until the end of 1998.

✓ - the removal of 12 illegally constructed sale booths until the end of 1998.

✓ - the destruction to ground level of the 3 hotels that are already expropriated.

e) The organisation on the site of a work shop meeting with the participation of Turkish and international scientists to prepare an action plan for the project of arranging the environment surrounding Pamukkale which is to be launched in 1999 is envisaged.