

Gobustan (Azerbaijan)

No 1076 rev

Official name as proposed

by the State Party: Gobustan Rock Art Cultural Landscape

Location: Garadagh District and Apsheron District, Baku City Administrative Territory

Brief description:

Rising out of the semi-desert of central Azerbaijan, above shattered cliffs bordering the Caspian Sea, is a plateau of rocky boulders hosting an extensive collection of some 6,000 rock engravings, which are a testimony to a warm, wet period after the last ice-age when people lived in caves, harvested food from the savannah grasslands of the plains, and fished in the greater Caspian Sea, then linked to the Aral and Black Seas.

Category of property:

In terms of the categories of cultural property set out in Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a *site*. In terms of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (2 February 2005) paragraph 47, it is also a *cultural landscape*.

1. BASIC DATA

Included in the Tentative List: 30 September 1998

International Assistance from the World Heritage Fund for preparing the Nomination: No

Date received by the World Heritage Centre: 27 January 2003

Background:

This is a deferred nomination (28 COM, Suzhou, 2004).

A first nomination dossier was examined by the World Heritage Committee at its 28th session (Suzhou, 2004). At the time, ICOMOS recommended that the property “*be deferred to allow the State Party to try and gain support for a research programme for the site, using the methodologies, which are now emerging, in other rock art sites in the region.*”

The World Heritage Committee adopted the following decision (28 COM 14B.37):

“*The World Heritage Committee,*

1. Defers the nomination of the Gobustan Rock Art Cultural Landscape, Azerbaijan, to allow the State Party

to undertake a research and analysis programme for the site, using methodologies which are now emerging in other rock art sites in the region, in order to quantify the site's significance in the wider world context.”

In 2005, the management plan was revised and on 30 January 2006 a new revised nomination document was submitted to UNESCO. This was supplemented by a plan of action in March 2006.

Since 2004 the Azerbaijani National Commission for UNESCO has initiated advisory missions from Norwegian experts. This resulted in a plan of action in 2005 that is very concrete in respect of what must be done on the property both immediately and in a long-term perspective. The Azerbaijani authorities have adopted the plan and submitted it as additional information to the nomination dossier.

Consultations: ICOMOS has consulted its International Scientific Committee on Rock Art.

Literature consulted (selection):

Anati E, with J Rustamov, F. Muradova, & M. Farajova, *Gobustan Azerbaijan*, 2001.

Dzhafarzade I M, *Gobustan : naskalnye izobrazheniia*, Baku 1973.

Qobustan, Catalogue of the exhibition, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, October 2002.

Rüstamov Jäfärqulu, *Gobustan dünyasi*, Baku 1994.

Technical Evaluation Mission: 1-6 November 2003
6-10 November 2006

Additional information requested and received from the State Party: ICOMOS sent a letter to the State Party on 30 January 2007 and the State party submitted supplementary information on 28 February 2007.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report: 11 mars 2007

2. THE PROPERTY

Description

The revised nomination provides extra material on the site and its documentation and management and this material is incorporated in the text below.

The nominated property is set above cliffs, part of a low plateau running north south, parallel to the Caspian Sea, a spur of the lower Caucasus Mountains. The property is approximately 65 km south of Baku and 6 km inland from the coast. The dramatic cliffs are highly visible from the main road south from Baku towards the Iranian border.

The property is set apart from the surrounding cliffs by a curious geological fragmentation in the rocks. The volcanic landscape rises up at the eastern end of the central Shirvan Steppe semi-desert of central Azerbaijan. The property spans three flat-topped hills covered by large calcareous blocks of Absheron limestone, which became detached as softer rocks eroded below them. This collapse formed

caves and rock shelters, mostly reached by sunlight, which could be used for shelter and habitation.

Within the property are upwards of 6,000 rock engravings, as well as the remains of settlement sites and burials, all reflecting an intensive use of the property stretching from the Upper Palaeolithic to the Middle Ages. These sites reflect a warmer and wetter climate than now prevails.

The property covers three areas of the plateau:

- Jinghirdagh Mountain-Yazylytepe hill
- Boyukdash Mountain
- Kichikdash Mountain

Together the three sites cover an area of 537.22 ha (a reduction in comparison to the initial nomination). They are now linked by buffer zones covering 3,096.34 ha (compared to 2,356.26 ha in the initial nomination). The area nominated is only a small part of the much larger protected Gobustan Reservation which covers some 4,000 ha.

The nominated property consists of the following:

- *Rock Art – Engravings*
- *Prehistoric and Bronze Age sites*
- *Ancient sanctuaries and associations with traditions, ideas and beliefs*

These are considered in turn:

- *Rock Art - Engravings*

The 2004 dossier stated that the wider plateau area had not been fully explored, with rock art sites and other archaeological settlements only being found in the eastern part of the plateau - that is the area put forward for nomination. This situation still prevails in the more recent dossier.

Currently there are 1,000 known rocks with carvings and these contain over 6,000 separate images. Within the nominated property there are archaeological remains that are not recorded. For example, in the northern part of the Jinghirdagh area where the BP pipeline cuts through the buffer zone, archaeological excavations have uncovered new sites, but as the nomination dossier points out, the exploration of the area is only partial.

The known images cover a wide range of animal and human figures: bovines, equines, mother figures, hunters, fishes, reptiles and insects as well as numerous boats. The images are realistic and large – sometimes larger than life-size - for instance one fisherman image is almost 4.3 m long, and several oxen images are over 2 m.

Most of the images are engraved through pecking, incisions or sometimes rubbing. A well-analysed and dated sequence for images on the property is yet to be achieved – this is said to be a goal.

The nomination dossier groups the images into six groups related to possible ages for the work. These span from the Paleolithic to the modern period. It is suggested that the earliest images are those of boats, mother figures, wild animals, fishes and hunters. Many of the male images show hunters with bows and arrows and details of their loin cloths. The boats are like canoes with people paddling, some are small for 2-4 people while others are much larger, apparently accommodating around forty people and with the boat prow crowned with sun motifs.

The earliest images of females show fat, steatopigic «mother» figures. What is called the undisputed masterpiece of Gobustan is an image of a woman full face and one in profile. In one cave only tattooed women appear, while in another pregnant women are found.

The animals depicted such as wild buffalo, goats, deer, wild pigs, horses and lions are animals that need a moister climate than exists today. It is suggested that at the time of the earliest rock drawings the climate was wetter with verdant vegetation in the area. These images also suggest that the Caspian Sea was at a higher level – probably making the three hills virtually islands – which would explain the prevalence of boat engravings and fishes. These factors make the rock engravings an extraordinary record of climate change.

It is suggested that these early sites can be dated by their relationship to excavated material and the known levels of the Caspian Sea which has risen and fallen by many metres over several millennia.

Pollen analysis has shown that the area in pre-historic times was heavily wooded. Traces of this ancient pine-oak forest are still found in crevices around the rocks and it is said that until recently such trees were growing in the neighbourhood of Gobustan.

The Neolithic period is said to be characterised by scenes of ritual and magic such as dancing and sacrifice as well as deer, goat and the first images of domesticated animals. During the Bronze Age the images become sketchier and include more deer, goats with rolled horns and deer and cattle pens as well as carriages and riders. Also evident are images of the dismemberment of animals similar to those on Mongolian petroglyphs.

In the Iron Age, armless anthropomorphic figures appear and the most recent images from the Middle Ages include a camel caravan, armed riders, and images with Islamic themes.

- *Prehistoric and Bronze Age sites*

In Gobustan, thick cultural layers are found in and in front of many of the rock art caves and shelters. To a certain degree, the layers overlap the rock art panels and this gives a unique situation for dating.

The nomination dossier mentions that excavations have been carried out in more than 20 pre-historic sites and that «numerous» Bronze Age burials have been discovered. No further precise details are given of location of sites, dates and finds.

- *Ancient sanctuaries and associations with traditions, ideas and beliefs*

The nomination dossier states that the « ancient sanctuaries indicate Gobustan was an important place of worship... the mountains... acquired the status of holy places », and that the 'rock art is directly and tangibly associated with the events, living traditions, ideas and beliefs of the population which have live in the area for more than 10,000 years » The dossier suggests that images of headless goats testify to sacrificial sites and that documentary evidence exists in Persian manuscripts for the use of sites as cult sites in the Middle Ages. Furthermore it is suggested that images sited high up suggest that they were deliberately placed to be seen. It is also stated that the local community still reveres certain places around Gobustan as sacred and some are used as cult sites, where wishes are made and rags hung on bushes. It is suggested that the cult sites are linked to manmade depressions to collect offerings and specific rock art images – ox, sun and goat images – and particularly goats without heads suggesting sacrifices. A Persian engraved inscription of the 13th-14th century records the use of the site for cult purposes.

History and development

Initial discoveries were made in 1939-40 and systematic explorations were conducted by I. M. Djafarsade from 1947 onwards. He recorded and analysed more than 3,500 images on 750 rocks. This early inventory was expanded by R. Djafarguly who made further discoveries and carried out excavations.

Since 1965, excavations have been carried out in more than 20 prehistoric sites and numerous Bronze Age structures have been discovered. Excavations carried out by D. Rustamov of one cave uncovered a 2 m stratigraphy covering 10,000 years. This material included a fallen engraved fragment that gave a *terminus ante quem* for this anthropomorphic figure – although no further details are given.

In 1966 the property was protected as a state Historical-Artistic Reservation as part of the wider Gobustan rock art reservation.

3. OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE, INTEGRITY AND AUTHENTICITY

Integrity and Authenticity

Integrity

Integrity refers to the wholeness and intactness of the cultural values of the property. Since 2004 although extra work has been conducted on creating a sound documentation base for the rock art images, the knowledge of the site does not extend evenly across the whole rock art reservation and therefore it is still difficult to assess whether the boundaries of the site are logical and encompass the core of the rock art images.

ICOMOS can therefore only reiterate its recommendation that it would be desirable for a large-scale survey of the wider environment to be carried out to justify the corpus of the rock art and thus the extent of protection needed.

Authenticity

Authenticity varies in the three areas due to disturbances through time. The most serious intrusive element is the graffiti that is found on several of the rock surfaces. The problem will be addressed as part of the conservation of the property.

The most remote and undisturbed landscapes are without doubt the Jinghirdag Mountain-Yazylytepe hill and Kichikdash Mountain. These areas need to be fully protected in order to ensure they keep their authenticity.

The most visited site, Boyukdash, has more disturbances in the form of installations such as a prison and stone quarry.

The numbering of sites with incised numbers chiselled into the rock surface is part of the documentation system from Soviet times. In the Management Plan this is described as a disturbing element and methods of masking by conservation will be considered. Although this is a form of disturbance and an impact on the authenticity of the rock engravings, it may also be regarded as part of the site history and the scientific history connected to the property .

More serious however, is the practice of highlighting of incised lines with toothpaste (also a custom from the Soviet period), and this should be removed as part of the conservation program in Gobustan Reserve.

In conclusion ICOMOS considers that authenticity of the property is adequate. However, the integrity of the property has not been sufficiently established due to the continuing need for a large-scale survey of the wider area.

Comparative analysis

The nomination makes stylistic comparisons with sites in the Near East, Central Asia and Europe. It suggests that Palaeolithic rock engravings exist in Gobustan, which therefore gives the property an importance, as these oldest sequences are not present elsewhere in Europe.

However as a detailed analysis of the wider Gobustan images has yet to be carried out and a sequence has yet to be established, it is currently not possible to draw these conclusions and say with certainty that Palaeolithic images exist.

Within Azerbaijan there are three other major rock art complexes:

- Absheron peninsular near Baku, where around 200 images of hunting, cult rituals, humans and different animals are carved rather like bas-reliefs on limestone blocks.
- Kelbadjar region at the feet of Delidag mountain in the west where an expedition in 1967 recorded scenes of hunting and cultivation, and images of deer and leopards. In all there are about 4,000 rock images dated to the Bronze Age.
- In the south-west, in Nakhchivan, 60 kms from the city of Ordubad, on the highest peak of the Small Caucasus-Gapijik, are thousands of petroglyph images dating apparently from the 7th to 1st

millenniums BC. These display humans, goats, oxen, ibex, deer and other animal images, as well as different « written signs ».

In terms of density of petroglyphs, cultural continuity, variety and preservation of images, it is suggested in the dossier that these are not comparable with Gobustan. However ICOMOS considers that further exploration of the wider Central Asian Region might reveal complementarities with Gobustan.

In terms of technique and style Gobustan oxen have many similarities with rock images of the Foz Côa Valley (Portugal) and bone engravings from Laugerie-Basse (France). Gobustan images of tattooed women bear some resemblance to images from sites in Russia, Moravia and North Africa, while some of the early hunters particularly the large size animal figures, display stylistic analogies to Western European examples. A specific comparative analysis between Gobustan Reserve Rock Art sites and Spanish Levante rock art has been carried out by Dr. G. Burger (University of Tübingen, Germany, 1999).

During the Bronze and Iron Ages the rock art images relate to other cultures around the Black Sea and, especially, to the « Kurgan culture ». In this regard there is interest in carrying out more work on comparing finds and images from Gobustan with sites on the eastern coast of the Caspian.

It is unquestionable that the Gobustan area contains a major corpus of rock art, in terms of the number and density of rock art sites. Few have such a long time sequence as Gobustan. The horizons of Early Hunters are concentrated in Gobustan: this could indicate its role as a transit area along the great migration routes of Eurasia.

However on the basis of current knowledge, it is difficult to place Gobustan precisely within the wider Central Asian context. Nevertheless the scale and scope of the images, the potential for further finds over a wider area, the links with other sites in Azerbaijan and the wider Kurgan area, and the particular early hunting images in Gobustan all combine to give it high value.

The need to carry out further thematic studies on rock art, including Central Asia has been acknowledged by ICOMOS and a global programme of studies is under preparation.

ICOMOS considers that the current comparative analysis reflects the current state of knowledge.

Justification of the Outstanding Universal Value

The Gobustan Rock Art Cultural Landscape is justified by the State Party as being of outstanding universal value for:

- its rich cultural landscape that reflects millennia of human evolution;
- the outstanding quality and concentration of the extensive rock engravings, and their state of conservation;
- the evidence for habitation from the Upper Palaeolithic to the Middle Ages;

- the way Gobustan is a meeting place between Europe and Asia, which provides evidence for the roots of European and Asian civilisations.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed

The property is nominated on the basis of criteria ii, iii and vi.

Criterion ii: This criterion is put forward by the State Party in connection with the Palaeolithic images. It also suggests that the property displays an outstanding range of rock engravings.

ICOMOS does not consider that sufficient information is known about the context for the rock engravings to assess whether they reflect an interchange.

ICOMOS does not consider that this criterion has been justified.

Criterion iii: The State Party justifies this criterion on the basis that the property demonstrates rock art over 40,000 years.

ICOMOS considers that the rock engravings are an exceptional testimony to a way of life that has disappeared and particularly in the way they graphically represent activities connected with hunting and fishing which reflect a time when the climate and vegetation of the area were quite different from today.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion is justified.

Criterion vi: The State Party justifies this criterion on the grounds that the ancient sanctuaries on the property were places of worship.

ICOMOS considers that with further evidence of the cult places, their disposition and use, and how they are related to the mountains, this criterion might be justified. Currently the beliefs and cult sites are not substantiated in sufficient detail in the nomination dossier to enable them to be seen as outstanding.

ICOMOS does not consider that this criterion has been justified.

ICOMOS considers that the Outstanding Universal Value has been demonstrated and that the nominated property meets criterion iii and might justify criteria ii and vi.

4. FACTORS AFFECTING THE PROPERTY

Development pressure

There is said to be no risk to the nominated area as no people live in the property.

In 2003 it was noted that there was an external development threat from an oil pipeline, which was then under construction across the northeast corner of the property's buffer zone. The pipeline is part of the line from Azerbaijan to Turkey, which was brokered by the USA

Government. The trench is 10 m wide and 4 m deep. This pipeline is now complete and during its construction further archaeological sites were identified. The pipeline has therefore impacted on the integrity of the property through damaging as yet unrecorded archaeological remains. There would seem to have been a good case for diverting this pipeline further away from the nominated property.

A further development threat is the spread of development along the coast from Baku. At the moment this development spreads from Baku beyond the property but there is currently no development between the main road and the cliff face – that is the approach to the property. However the proposed Buffer Zone does not cover this area (see below).

Lack of knowledge of the property

This is considered to be a difficult problem given the vast area of the property. Disseminating knowledge and also promoting involvement of local people would seem to be essential components in a strategy to engage the widest support for the property and thus try and give it community protection. This is addressed by the Action Plan.

Environmental pressures

Climate change and air pollution are listed as contributing towards erosion. This would be another reason to limit the nearness of industrial development to the property.

A solid waste dump near the jail adjoining the property is another problem as this prohibits reclamation of this area.

Natural disasters and risk preparedness

The main threat is from the Kaniza Volcano in the Buffer Zone, which is active, the latest eruption being in 1998. There is clearly little that can be done to mitigate the damage caused by eruptions.

Visitor/tourism pressures

At the moment visitor numbers are small – from between 2,002 to 7,260 visitors per year (estimation carried out during the period 1998-2005). Tourists are normally accompanied by guides. However it is said that school visits can cause problems with graffiti. Given the large size of the property, accompanying visitors at all times can be a problem.

Wheeled vehicles used to cause some damage being able to get close to the rock engravings, but measures have now been put in place to limit access.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the main risks to the property are a future increase in visitor numbers without sufficient resources to limit access to the property and before a more detailed survey has been undertaken to identify the sensitive areas across the nominated property.

5. PROTECTION, CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

Boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone

The boundaries are linear and drawn to roughly encompass the main known sites in three separate areas around the highest areas of the property. However it is acknowledged that the wider area is unexplored – and even inside the nominated property. The boundary cannot be said to represent the extent of the rock art or even the main part of it. ICOMOS considers that the boundaries will need to be reconsidered once further information is known on the scope and extent of the site.

The Buffer Zone encompasses most of the wider Gobustan Reservation – a protected area. The Buffer Zone does not include the area between the main Baku road and the cliff face, currently undeveloped but with development pressure to the north and south. ICOMOS considers that consideration should be given to enlarging the Buffer Zone to include the cliff face and the flat land between it and the main road as these form the approach to the property.

The recently constructed oil pipeline cuts across the buffer zone and does therefore impinge to an extent on the wider protected area.

Although determination of the appropriate boundary and buffer zone requires further survey, ICOMOS considers that it is likely that the boundaries of the core and buffer zone are not sufficient to enclose the main occurrences of rock art and to ensure adequate protection.

Ownership

The property including the buffer zone is owned by the State.

Protection

Legal Protection

The Gobustan State Historical-Artistic Reservation is protected by a decree of 1966.

The archaeological sites within the nominated property are included in the Reservation.

This general protective law is reinforced by laws concerning the protection of historical and cultural monuments and their utilisation (1978 and 1998), and by decrees concerning the implementation of these laws (1998) and on special authorisation of excavations (2000).

A decree of 1950 put the property under the control of the State Authorities and closed all stone quarries in the area.

ICOMOS considers that the protective measures for the property are adequate.

Conservation

History of Conservation

Little formal work has been carried out so far at the property in terms of active conservation. Instead measures have been aimed at preventative conservation through protecting the property by Decree and through the presence of custodians on the property. Such work that has been carried out is said to not currently be ideal and this is

linked to lack of training of the staff – something to be addressed in the action plan.

Present state of conservation

The dry semi-desert climate and the degree of remoteness of the area both help its protection. However it is noted that differences can be found between the Boyukdash area and the other two areas, which are accessible by road. Since 2003 a detailed survey of the state of conservation of the site images has been carried out.

Active Conservation measures

Custodians are tasked with regular inspections of the area, but given the size of the property, and the number of images, this is an almost impossible task. During the first evaluation mission it was noted that shepherds were assisting in surveillance: this is a very positive way of involving the local population in the management of the property to great advantage, and would seem to be the only feasible way to broaden monitoring on the property.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that special attention is needed to establish active conservation measures on the property.

Management

Day to day management for the property is the responsibility of the Director of the Gobustan State Historic-Artistic Reservation. A scientific advisory body has been appointed to monitor the state of implementation of the conservation and management policies for the nominated property. This is “Azerberpa” within the Scientific Research Institute for the Restoration of Architectural Monuments.

Thirty-one people work in the Reservation. These include 7 Researchers, 5 Custodians, 2 Tourist Guides and a Museum Monitoring Officer. Since 1996, five members of staff have attended workshops on tourism and museum management organised by the Ministry of Culture of Azerbaijan.

A strategic management plan was submitted in February 2004. This did not set out detailed actions to follow from objectives. The objective on archaeology included the need to establish an archaeological map and prepare a framework for future archaeological work. The plan acknowledged that funding to pursue these objectives was a key issue and the Steering Group was tasked with investigating sources of funding from potential partners, nationally and internationally.

During 2005 a revised nomination dossier was produced together with an Action Plan, developed with assistance of Norwegian experts in March 2006. This plan was submitted as additional information to the previous Management Plan. The Action Plan includes three sub-plans:

1. Documentation and conservation
2. Management, monitoring and maintenance
3. Presentation: Education, Information and Tourism

Management strategies are listed and actions proposed. The most important objective will be to establish and develop the Gobustan Reserve Museum as an operational and effective base for future work in the area, including management, monitoring and maintenance. The future Museum and Visitor Centre will function both as a base for presentation and as a base for research.

ICOMOS considers that it is important that all data connected to the Reserve, both documentation and artefacts from excavations are gathered in the centre and kept in depots with adequate conditions for climate and security. Modern and professional archives and storage for old site records, photographs and sketches need to be established.

Documentation

In the plan of action, a documentation program for archaeological, geological, botanical and zoological data is set out. The program has short and long-term dimensions. The program also includes international workshops that will enable the staff to increase their competence and establish networks.

Many of the known engravings and archaeological sites are mapped with GPS and recorded in a data base. This work has been carried out since the arrival of computer equipment in 2004. It is a goal that all images on the site will be recorded by this method. This is an improvement compared to the last evaluation mission in 2004. However, no site map showing the disposition of the rock art or the archaeological sites was provided with the nomination dossier.

Conservation

The Action Plan proposes that « damage » documentation should be carried out before any conservation activities are accomplished. The plan points to the fact that one of the reasons why the conservation tasks are so poor is because the competence among the staff is poor. One of the most important tasks will therefore be to increase competence.

Some of the rock walls and boulders, especially on the lower terrace in Boyukdash, seem to be overgrown by lichen, which make it very difficult to carry out good documentation procedures by tracing or by photo. The management plan does not discuss this problem, which could be solved either by washing the surface in ethanol, by covering it for some time, or by other methods.

Presentation: Education, Information and Tourism

The third sub-plan contains issues concerning both the internal education of staff, research and presentation for the public. Important aspects will be the improvement of the on-site presentation with boards and educated guides, as well as further research. Archaeological investigation has been going on for a long time in the area and a lot of data has been collected which could be used. Development of tourism is an important issue for the Azerbaijani authorities. The Presentation and Information strategies and actions will be an important part of this development.

Development plans of tourist installations such as hotels and restaurants are being planned in the Gobustan area. ICOMOS considers that it is important to stress that this

kind of infrastructure should be kept outside the buffer zone of the property.

Resources

The Action Plan is very ambitious and aims to solve most of the problems in a period of ten years. However the success of the Plan will depend on the financial support from the government and international actors, which is not yet in place. The Department for Culture of the Executive Power of Baku has up until now had financial responsibility for the Reserve. However, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism will assume the responsibility for financial means in the coming year.

Under the Baku City Executive Power, Department of Culture annual budgets of between \$19,000 and \$24,000 were allocated between 1999 and 2002. On top of this the property is allowed to keep admission income and sales income.

ICOMOS requested assurances from the State Party that the Ministry of Culture and Tourism is committed to implementing the Action Plan and will provide the necessary resources to begin implementing the Action Plan immediately, in particular the short-term actions related to documentation, training in conservation, interpretation and visitor management as set out in the sub-plans.

In response the State Party said that The Ministry of Culture and Tourism had addressed the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan to allocate financial resources from the state budget for the Gobustan Rock Art Cultural Landscape. However no assurances were given that this request had been met.

ICOMOS considers that the Action Plan analyses well the main issues affecting the property and suggests appropriate actions to address these. This Action Plan as yet is unfunded. ICOMOS considers that commitment is needed to implement the Plan in order to: complete the documentation, put in place more appropriate conservation and technical support, improve the competence of staff and carry out necessary urgent conservation work.

6. MONITORING

The nomination dossier states that the latest inventory was undertaken in 2001, but also says that since 2004 staff has been working on creating a GIS database for the property, with the assistance of newly installed computers.

Monitoring of visitors and the micro-climate of the property is carried out regularly. Recently a start has been made in comparing the state of conservation of the property with its condition over the last 50-60 years through the use of photographs.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Since 2004 there have been improvements in the sense of more professional management, documentation strategies and commitment to the development of a database. Most crucially an Action Plan has been developed that addresses the needs of the site and sets out short and long term

actions. The proposed actions are in the future and if implemented will lead to a better understanding of what exists, what the values are, appropriate conservation and management methods and better training for staff.

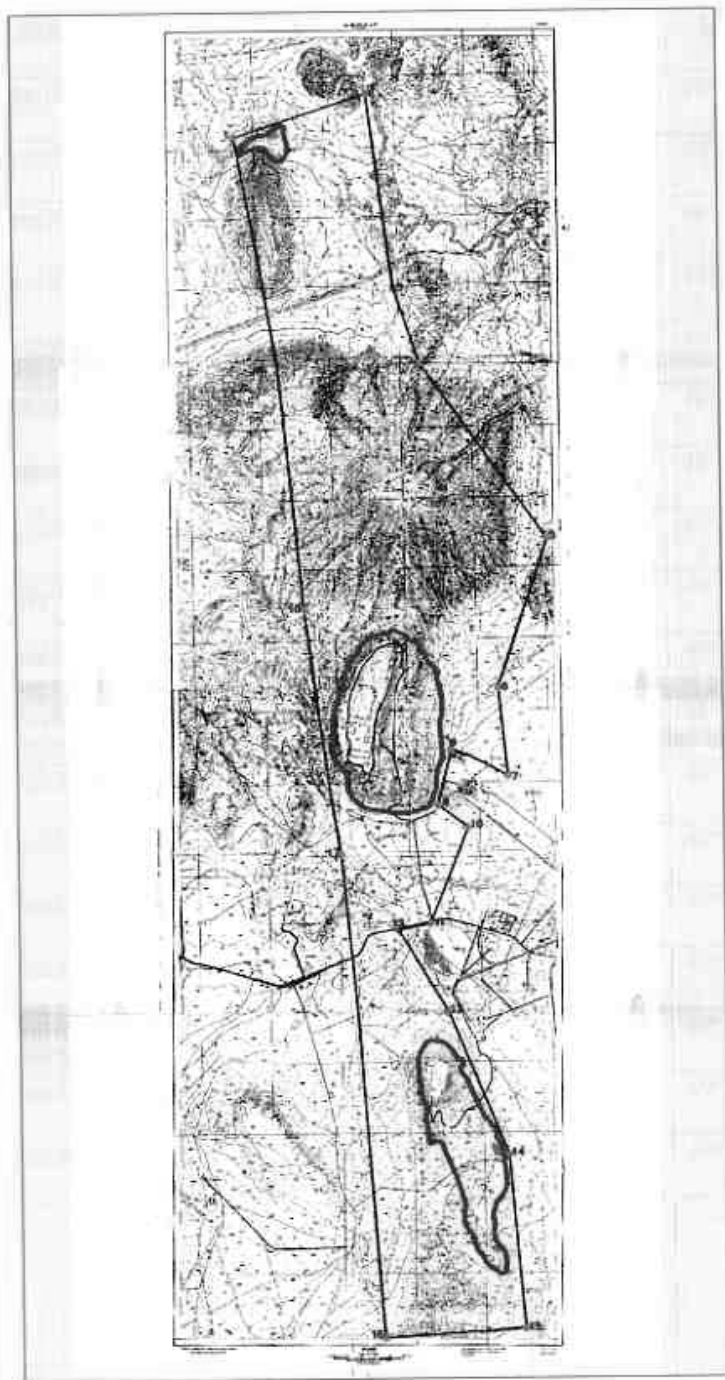
The crucial point is whether there are likely to be resources to follow up the plan of action. The general impression is that all levels in the Ministry of Culture and Tourism as well as the National Commission for UNESCO and the Heydar Aliyev Foundation will be supportive in the sense of development and money.

Currently however there is no definite commitment from the State Party to provide the necessary resources to implement this Action Plan.

Recommendation with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the nomination of Gobustan Rock Art Cultural Landscape, to the World Heritage List be *referred* back to the State Party of Azerbaijan in order to allow it to:

- put in place support for the implementation of the Action Plan drawn up as part of the Management Plan and in particular to indicate a timeframe within which the property will be documented;
- consider reviewing the boundaries of the core zone in the light of a more detailed assessment of the scope and extent of the site;
- consider extending the Buffer Zone to cover the approach to the site from the east.



- WH Site Area
- WHS Buffer Zone/Gobustan Reserve
- ⌘ Archaeological, Historical and Cultural Sites

Map showing the boundaries of the nominated property



General view of the site



Ana Zaga Cave at Boyukdash



Anthropomorphs at Boyukdash



Inscriptions of bulls at Boyukdash