
Göbekli Tepe (Turkey) No 1572

Official name as proposed by the State Party

Göbekli Tepe

Location

Şanlıurfa Province
District of Haliliye
Turkey

Brief description

Göbekli Tepe lies some 15 km north-east of the modern day town of Şanlıurfa. Round-oval and rectangular monumental megalithic structures, interpreted as enclosures, were built by groups of hunter-gatherers in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic period, between 9600 and 8200 BC. Distinctive T-shaped pillars with rich carved imagery provide an insight into the world view and belief systems of prehistoric populations living in Upper Mesopotamia some 11,500 years ago.

Category of property

In terms of categories of cultural sites, as defined in Article 1 of the World Heritage Convention of 1972, this is a *site*.

1 Basic data

Included in the Tentative List

15 April 2011

International Assistance from the World Heritage Fund for preparing the Nomination

None

Date received by the World Heritage Centre

31 January 2017

Background

This is a new nomination.

Consultations

ICOMOS consulted its International Scientific Committee on Archaeological Heritage Management (ICAHM) and several independent experts.

Technical Evaluation Mission

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the site from 2 to 6 October 2017.

Additional information requested and received from the State Party

A letter was sent by ICOMOS to the State Party on 21 September 2017 requesting additional information on the ownership, protection and management of the site, facilities and infrastructures for visitors, development projects and financial resources. An answer was received on 6 November 2017, and the information provided has been included in this document.

An ICOMOS Interim Report was sent to the State Party on 22 December 2017, and the additional information in response to this report was received on 26 February 2018 and has been included in the relevant sections of this report.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report

14 March 2018

2 The property

Description

Göbekli Tepe, in the Germuş Mountains of south-east Anatolia, lies some 15 km north-east of the modern-day town of Şanlıurfa and 2.5 km east of the village of Örencik. The site covers an area of 126 ha, and consists of a natural limestone plateau on which stands an artificial hill (tell). It is located in Upper Mesopotamia, between the upper and middle reaches of the rivers Tigris and Euphrates, in the foothills of the Taurus Mountains, in a region which saw the emergence of the oldest farming communities in the world.

The tell consists of megalithic stone structures, together with numerous other non-monumental buildings, erected by groups of hunter-gatherers in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic period (10th-9th millennia BCE). The monumental structures are interpreted, according to the nomination dossier, as enclosures forming part of a supra-regional Neolithic ritual centre. The monuments were probably used in connection with public rituals, possibly of a funerary nature, and feasting. While excavations initially were understandably focused on these structures, recent excavations are also providing evidence of what might be termed “domestic structures” of lesser architectural complexity in close proximity to the monumental buildings.

The first phase of Göbekli Tepe (Layer III) dates from the 10th millennium BCE and is assigned to the Early Pre-Pottery Neolithic (PPNA). The excavations of the deposits of this period have enabled the identification of monumental architecture with round-oval enclosures between 10 and 30 metres wide, surrounded by monolithic pillars carved in a distinctive T-shape. The pillars are connected by walls and benches. The pillars are between 3 and 5 metres high, and their number varies between 10 and 12. There are two central monoliths which are taller (up to 5.5 metres). The animals depicted at Göbekli Tepe are all wild. Significant space is given over to the most dangerous animals

(aurochs, boars, bears and panthers portrayed in aggressive stances, snakes, arthropods) and to scavengers (large birds of prey). Amongst the imagery, the presence of the human species is discreet, but tends to increase in later phases of the site.

It appears that the monumental enclosures of Layer III were then intentionally backfilled, according to the nomination dossier. The sediment that forms the backfill material consists of limestone rubble and flakes of flint. The fills also contain numerous animal bones, probably the result of large feasts according to the nomination dossier.

In some parts of the tell, buildings from a later phase have been constructed on top of the PPNA monumental architecture. This layer (Layer II) dates from the 9th millennium BCE and has been assigned to Pre-Pottery Neolithic B (PPNB). The smaller, usually rectangular, rooms are characteristic of this phase. They often have lime plaster (*terrazzo*) floors. In this later period, the number and height of the T-shaped pillars in the rooms are reduced.

The uppermost deposits (Layer I) consist of surface soil resulting from erosion processes and a plough horizon which bear witness to the use of this fertile soil for agricultural activities in recent centuries.

Only a few buildings have been excavated. They have been designated A to H in order of discovery. The geophysical surveys indicate that at least twenty or so other buildings exist on the site.

On the limestone plateau, a system of channels and cisterns has been documented, although it has not been determined with certainty that these structures are contemporaneous with the Neolithic architecture nearby. Prehistoric quarries have also been identified. Several negative shapes and even a couple of unfinished and abandoned pillars still in situ attest to these quarrying activities. Another structure cut down into the bedrock of the south-western plateau has been identified as the remains of a circular enclosure.

History and development

As the highest point in the surrounding landscape, the nominated property most likely already served as a gathering point for hunter-gatherer groups living in the region in the preceding Palaeolithic period. The accumulation of the tell seems to have started before the construction of the first Neolithic structures in the 10th millennium BC (PPNA). It is as yet unclear however whether the earliest monumental buildings were semi-subterranean, i.e. if their foundations were sunk into existing and hence older deposits. According to the nomination dossier, the buildings were then abandoned and backfilled with large quantities of limestone rubble, knapped flints, and worked ground-stone, as well as animal and (in smaller amounts) human bone material. It is not possible to determine exactly in what period they were abandoned, since constant rebuilding and repair

seems to have taken place, and the buildings appear to have been completely emptied before backfilling took place.

In some parts of the tell, later (PPNB) architecture – with rectangular and much smaller rooms – has been constructed on top of the older monumental structures. These rooms were not built on top of the area of the PPNA rooms; instead, this area was separated from later developments by a terrace wall, thus leading to the development of a hollow surrounded by higher lying mounds. Following the end of the PPNB with its later megalithic structures, human activities at the site appear to come to an end.

It was not until the Roman era, some 8,000 years later, that limestone was quarried on the south-eastern plateau. Two possible (and probably Islamic) graves are considerably later. Only the fertile brown topsoil covering the entire mound testifies to later agricultural land-use.

Since the onset of excavations in 1995, the conservation and preservation of uncovered prehistoric structures have been a permanent concern and an essential component of the archaeological research. Covered with backfill for approximately the last 10,000 years, the stone walls and T-shaped limestone pillars are well preserved. Only in those areas where the archaeological material was close to the surface has some slight damage been observed, probably as a result of agricultural activities.

3 Outstanding Universal Value, integrity and authenticity

Comparative analysis

The State Party makes comparisons with other properties having similar cultural characteristics that are not inscribed either on the World Heritage List or on the Tentative Lists. Other properties mentioned in the comparative analysis are attributable to the Pre-Pottery Neolithic and situated in Southeast Anatolia, such as Jerf el Ahmar, Nevali Çori and Çayönü. This region is the most important in the Middle East in terms of bearing witness to the birth of the Neolithic.

In the additional information, the State Party sets out in detail the points of comparison, which consist mainly of ways of life, architecture (megalithic buildings with T-pillars) and imagery (present both on the monumental buildings and the objects). The State Party claims that the nominated property offers by far the most monumental architecture and the richest imagery, and bears witness to the most ancient monumental pillar constructions.

ICOMOS notes, however, that the other properties are presented as if they were contemporary with the nominated property, when in fact some of them date from 1500 years after the main period of settlement of Göbekli Tepe.

Other comparisons are made with properties inscribed on the World Heritage List, particularly the Neolithic site of Çatalhöyük. In architectural terms, the excavation at Çatalhöyük has uncovered constructions – mainly from the 7th millennium BC onwards – bearing witness to activities that are both domestic and ritual, without it being possible to distinguish non-ritual from specific ritual spaces. As for comparisons between the motifs at the two sites, ICOMOS recommends a cautious approach with regards to interpretation. In addition to signification issues, these iconographic sources raise considerable problems in terms of identification, and have given rise to a great deal of debate.

The other World Heritage List properties mentioned in the comparison do not have such spectacular ceremonial constructions until several millennia later (Stonehenge in England, Choirokitia in Cyprus, the Heart of Neolithic Orkney in Scotland, the Megalithic Temples of Malta, the Antequera Dolmens Site in Spain, and the Gochang, Hwasun and Ganghwa Dolmen Sites in the Republic of Korea).

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis, supplemented by additional information about the context of the Neolithic (PPNA/early PPNB) sites in the region, justifies consideration of the property for the World Heritage List.

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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:

- This is the oldest known megalithic architecture in the world, consisting of round-oval and rectangular limestone structures, with large T-shaped monolithic pillars carved from locally quarried limestone.
- The buildings are considered to be amongst the earliest evidence worldwide for human-made megalithic structures constructed for the ritual purposes of their prehistoric populations. The enclosures were built in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic A and B periods, between approximately 9600 and 8200 BC.
- The characteristic T-shaped pillars, embodying a schematised anthropomorphic figure, were carved from quarries in the adjacent limestone plateau using stone and bone tools.
- The property is one of the most impressive prehistoric megalithic monuments in the world on account of its great antiquity, the number and sophistication of its limestone megalithic buildings, the size of the stones used, and their rich carved and engraved imagery.
- The imagery of the nominated property provides

unprecedented insights into the worldview and belief systems of prehistoric populations living in Upper Mesopotamia some 11,500 years ago, a time which represents one of the most momentous transitions in human history, with a change in the way of life from hunter-gatherer subsistence to farming, also referred to as Neolithisation.

In the additional information provided on 26 February 2018, the State Party revised its justification of Outstanding Universal Value in light of the latest results of archaeological excavations. The State Party recognises the importance of the rectangular structures attributable to Early Pre-Pottery Neolithic B, and the possibility of continuous occupation during the subsequent period dated at 8200-7300 BC (MPPNB). The State Party states that the buildings visible today are the culmination of several centuries of construction and reconstruction activities. During this period of more than 1,400 years, the walls and pillars were removed from their original location, and incorporated in parts of the same building or in other structures. The "first temples of mankind" interpretation is also discussed and set aside in favour of the broader concept of "ancestor worship". The hypothesis of semi-permanent occupation of the nominated property is also raised. The State Party stresses the importance of re-evaluating earlier results and interpretations, and new discoveries made during recent excavations, in order to advance our understanding of Göbekli Tepe.

ICOMOS considers that the proposed justification of Outstanding Universal Value is adequate.

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

Several recent infrastructure projects are concentrated around the southern boundaries of the management zone. ICOMOS notes that the electricity pylons and road network are visible, as are the irrigation channels to the south, and a limestone quarry north of the village of Örencik. Contrary to what is stated in the additional information provided by the State Party on 6 November 2017, ICOMOS considers that both the Adana-Şanlıurfa highway, 2.5 km from Göbekli Tepe, and the irrigation channel 5 km from Göbekli Tepe, have a visual impact on the nominated property. In the additional information provided on 26 February 2018, the State Party states that, as the irrigation channels are under construction, building materials are visible. It claims that, once the construction works are completed, visual integrity will be restored. However, ICOMOS considers that steps must be taken to landscape the channel, so as to reduce its visual impact. In addition, options should be considered that would reduce the visual impact of the quarry to the west.

ICOMOS stresses that it is necessary to monitor developments around the property that could pose a threat to the property's landscape and visual integrity. This includes monitoring the visual impact of possible "compulsory infrastructure" and protection measures for the agricultural land in the Harran plain. With regard to the urban expansion of Şanlıurfa, ICOMOS notes that careful attention must be given to the location of new buildings within the city boundaries. The Environmental Plan for Adiyaman, Şanlıurfa and Diyarbakır should also be set out in more detail in order to guarantee the integrity of the property. In addition, any new development project in the vicinity of the property must give rise to a "Heritage Impact Assessment" and must be submitted for examination to the World Heritage Committee, in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*.

ICOMOS considers that future development projects (railway line, motorway) and the increase in tourist numbers likely to be generated are a very serious concern, and that, in view of these threats, the integrity of the property is extremely vulnerable.

ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity are highly vulnerable due to the future development projects and the increase of tourism.

Authenticity

According to the State Party, the property meets the conditions of authenticity, particularly as regards the quality of situation and setting, spirit and impression, and the quality of form and design, materials and substance, use and function, and traditions.

The megalithic structures have largely retained the original form and design of their architectural elements, together with numerous decorative elements and craft works that provide an insight into the way of life of the societies that occupied the site.

ICOMOS considers that the results of more than twenty years of research and archaeological excavations on the site testify to its authenticity. The excavations under way and their analysis since the mid-1990s also provide a more balanced and detailed view of the relationship between the various aspects of usage and the prehistoric importance of the property.

However, ICOMOS considers that the future development projects, and the limited nature of the documentation concerning the buffer zone and the management zone, mean that authenticity is vulnerable.

ICOMOS considers that the conditions of authenticity are vulnerable because of the future development projects, and the limited nature of the documentation in the buffer zone and management zone.

ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity are highly vulnerable.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed

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

Criterion (i): *represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the communities that built the nominated property lived at the time of one of the most momentous transitions in human history, from the way of life of hunter-gatherer subsistence to that of the first farmers. It had previously seemed unimaginable that Pre-Pottery Neolithic A groups (9600-8700 BC) could accomplish such architectural feats. The discoveries have raised many questions about societies attributable to PPNA, relating, for example, to social hierarchies, territoriality, the division of labour, craft specialisation, and gender roles.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property is one of the first known examples of human-built monuments. The monumental scale of the site and its unique architectural and artistic characteristics show that humans in the 10th and 9th millennia BC had a profound knowledge of building methods and sophisticated artistic techniques. The most significant characteristics of the property are the ancient nature of the construction (some 12,000 years ago) during a period of fundamental changes in human social and cultural structures (Neolithisation) and its monumental dimensions.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified.

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 carved and engraved images of the nominated property include many species of wild animals, birds and insects, and human representations, all of which provide a unique insight into the animist vision of the world of Neolithic humans in the 10th and 9th millennia BC. These carved and engraved images are interpreted as telling stories of foundation myths. Other archaeological remains, e.g. motifs of animals and geometrical figures engraved on objects, bear witness to the interchange of this set of human values over a large geographical area, possibly even suggesting the existence of a regional community linked together by common values.

ICOMOS considers that wording such as "narratives of foundation myths" is not sufficiently supported by solid scientific evidence, and that the justification of this criterion would be strengthened if it placed more

emphasis on the idea of the nominated property as a channel for the introduction of new artistic and architectural forms that were to shape the region during the Neolithic period, and probably other areas beyond.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property represents one of the first manifestations of human-made monumental architecture, and that its building techniques (semi-subterranean with pillars) and its imagery were disseminated and replicated at other sites in the Middle East from the earliest Neolithic periods, PPNA and PPNB, onwards.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified.

Criterion (iii): *bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the nominated property is a key site for the study of the socio-ritual practices of communities living in Upper Mesopotamia at the time of a major socio-economic transition. In addition to the construction of monumental buildings, the nominated property provides evidence of the ways in which prehistoric groups acted when confronted with death. Fragmented human remains, uncovered in the backfill in monumental buildings, present a clear predominance of skull fragments, some of which bear traces of intentional working. The attested working of three skull fragments very probably bears witness to the public display of the skulls and of a cult associated with them.

The additional information provided by the State Party also indicates the presence of a grave, with three individuals, which had been disturbed and was uncovered in 2017.

ICOMOS notes that, at the current state of the research, the hypothesis of a purported skull cult will need to be confirmed by future archaeological excavations.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has not 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 the property is home to the world's first human-built monumental (megalithic) buildings. The monolithic T-shaped pillars, which are believed to be representations of mythical ancestors, or even incipient deities, were carved from the adjacent limestone plateau and attest to new levels of architectural and engineering technology. They are thus believed to bear witness to the presence of specialised craftsmen, and possibly the emergence of more hierarchical forms of human society,

as opposed to preceding hunter-gatherer societies which were more egalitarian.

ICOMOS considers that the arguments relating to the ritual function of the nominated property are not correctly developed.

Furthermore, ICOMOS considers that the nominated property is one of the first manifestations of human-made monumental architecture. The structures constitute a technical feat through their construction, and bear witness to human art, with a very substantial number of low-reliefs and carvings, mainly of animals.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (i), (ii) and (iv), but the conditions of integrity and authenticity are highly vulnerable.

Description of the attributes

The attributes expressing the Outstanding Universal Value of the property are the tells and the limestone plateau in the setting of the surrounding plain, the remains uncovered *in situ*, which include the megalithic enclosures with their carved monolithic pillars and openings, the carved and engraved representations, the artefacts uncovered and the other traces of prehistoric human activities (quarries, cisterns, etc.).

4 Factors affecting the property

The development pressures include the irrigation channels, roads, sign pylons and electricity pylons which could affect the panoramic views from the property. With the Atatürk Dam located about 80 km north of the property, the irrigation channels in the fields have become a dominant feature in the landscape around the site, and are visible from the main road. Around the property, a vast network of irrigation channels is still under construction. ICOMOS considers that the new transport lines and the construction of infrastructure likely to modify and/or have an impact on the landscape must be carefully monitored. Urban development is rapid in the city centre of Şanlıurfa. The area is also being promoted as a major tourist destination in Turkey. The threat of urban expansion must be taken into account in planning decisions, and the same applies to the working of the limestone quarries in the landscape near the property.

ICOMOS notes that landscaping of the irrigation channels to the east and southeast, and of the limestone quarries in the village of Örencik, could limit the visual impact on the property.

The nomination dossier states that conservation and land use measures are defined in the Environmental Plan of Adiyaman-Şanlıurfa-Diyarbakır (scale 1:100,000). The State Party also refers to other

measures to protect agricultural land, such as the extended protection zone of the Plain of Harran, in which the nominated property is located. It is stressed that some agricultural infrastructure, and “compulsory infrastructure”, will be exempted from a heritage impact assessment.

In the additional information provided on 6 November 2017, the State Party refers to the possibility of building “compulsory infrastructure”, such as the railway network mentioned in the nomination dossier, for which no assessment of visual impact on the site would be required. ICOMOS considers nevertheless that a heritage impact assessment is necessary, in order to evaluate the threats that could adversely affect the property’s values.

In the additional information provided by the State Party on 26 February 2018 it is stated that the railway line will be located approximately 2.5 km from Göbekli Tepe. ICOMOS notes that it will be aligned with the south-east boundary of the management zone, and with part of its eastern boundary. Furthermore, ICOMOS notes that the assertion that the proposed railway line will not be visible from the interior of the nominated property and its buffer zone does not seem to be supported by an analysis of its visual or other impacts. ICOMOS considers that a detailed assessment of the impact of the proposed railway line on the site and of its landscaping before construction will be necessary, in line with the ICOMOS *Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments*, and the result of this assessment will have to be communicated to the World Heritage Committee, in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*.

According to the State Party, the facilities for the research project and for visitors are located in the buffer zone and have been built in a way that minimises impact on the site. The two shelters constructed on the site have been designed to protect the property’s integrity (in the light of the results of the geophysical surveys).

However, ICOMOS considers it would be unwise to construct new buildings or tourism infrastructure within the boundaries of the property and its buffer zone, as this could adversely affect the property’s attributes. Access to the site for visitors and researchers should be temporary and controlled. All facilities for visitors should be situated well away from the property.

The property is considered to have great potential to make a substantial economic contribution to the tourism sector in this region. The pressures generated by very strong tourist appeal could however potentially have an impact on the property’s attributes. At present, some 1,000 visitors daily can be expected during peak periods. There could be a considerable threat of tourist saturation, given that only the main excavation zone, which is very small, is open to visitors. There are currently no additional tourist itineraries that could help regulate pressure when tourist numbers are very high.

ICOMOS considers that the growing number of visitors is a real threat. It is necessary to calculate the capacity of the site in terms of visitor numbers, and a viable visitor management plan must be drawn up to lessen the negative impact of tourism. It is necessary to strike the right balance between tourism and conservation of the property.

In the additional information provided by the State Party it is stated that a visitor management plan is currently in preparation. A preliminary plan will be ready for implementation in October 2018.

The property is located in a zone of low seismic activity in Turkey, but any seismic movement could cause serious damage to the structures. No analysis of this threat has been provided in the nomination dossier. Fires are also possible, and landslides caused by dry/wet cycles, especially in winter.

ICOMOS recommends that a risk preparation plan be drawn up, based on the Resource Manual “Managing Disaster Risks for World Heritage” (2010).

ICOMOS considers that the main threats to the property are development pressures, environmental factors and the rapid growth of tourism.

5 Protection, conservation and management

Boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone

The boundaries of the nominated property follow the natural topographic features (i.e. the tell forming the boundary of the property (126 ha) and part of the limestone plateau), while the buffer zone boundary has been drawn on the basis of observation points (461 ha).

It should be noted that the management plan indicates a larger management zone (2306 ha), which encompasses the nominated property and the buffer zone initially set out in the nomination dossier. ICOMOS considers that this larger management zone is essential to protect the relationship between the landscape and the site in a long-term perspective, and in order to control future developments. The protection measures that apply to the management zone are set out in the Environmental Plan for Adiyaman, Şanlıurfa and Diyarbakır. It is essential that the protection measures relating to this larger management area are effectively applied.

In the additional information provided on 6 November 2017, the State Party states that the larger management zone set out in the management plan will support the buffer zone initially set out in the nomination dossier. It should be stressed that the State owns the bulk of the management zone (approximately 70%), with the rest being the property of private landowners.

ICOMOS considers that the boundaries of the nominated property and of its buffer zone are adequate, as the management plan takes into account the more extensive management zone of the property.

Ownership

Ownership of the nominated property and its buffer zone is split between the state and individual private landowners (20 parcels of land). The State Party currently owns 554 ha (out of the 587 ha formed by the nominated property and its buffer zone). The parcels of the nominated property all belong to the State Party. About 12 landowners have parcels used for grazing and farming.

Protection

The nominated property is covered by Protection of Cultural and Natural Properties Law No. 2863/1983, as amended in 1987 and 2004, which sets out rules and regulations for cultural heritage property.

In 2005, the tell and the limestone plateau were inscribed as a 1st Degree Archaeological Conservation Area by a decision of the Diyarbakır Regional Council for Conservation of Cultural and Natural Properties. In 2016, the 3rd Degree Archaeological Conservation Area around the nominated property zone, i.e. the property's buffer zone, was also registered by a decision of the Şanlıurfa Regional Council for Conservation of Cultural Properties.

ICOMOS notes with concern that infrastructure has been built inside the property itself, inscribed as a 1st Degree Archaeological Conservation Area, for tourism purposes and not only to protect the excavation zone.

ICOMOS notes that it is important to assess the possibility of inscribing the buffer zone as a 1st Degree Conservation Area, as development possibilities are then more restrictive, and limited to certain categories of infrastructure. ICOMOS notes with concern that 3rd Degree Conservation Areas may not prevent building permits if no archaeological remains are uncovered during the preventive excavations, thus generating strong development project pressures.

ICOMOS notes that archaeological sites have been identified in the buffer zone, notably several sites with lithic artefacts attributable to the Pre-Pottery Neolithic period, together with cisterns, quarries and a watchtower dating from the Roman and Byzantine periods. ICOMOS considers that, to preserve the visual integrity and archaeological potential of the property, the buffer zone should be looked on solely as a zone dedicated to research (scheduled archaeological excavations) and not as a zone for any future development projects. It is also advisable to further raise the awareness of local residents about the need to protect the buffer zone.

In the additional information provided on 26 February 2018 it is stated that the management zone is covered by the various existing environmental laws. According to the State Party, the Environmental Plan for

Adıyaman, Şanlıurfa and Diyarbakır guarantees the integrity of the management zone, and the zones to be protected in view of their natural and ecological characteristics are also protected by Law 2872/1983 on the Environment.

However, ICOMOS considers that the future development projects and the increase in tourist numbers are causes for concern, and that, in view of these threats, the protection measures for the management zone will need to be strengthened.

ICOMOS considers that the legal protection and the property protection measures are appropriate, but that the buffer zone protection measurements would be strengthened if the buffer zone became a 1st Degree Conservation Zone.

Conservation

An inventory of the property has been kept since 1995. At present, less than 10% of the tell has been excavated. Because of the considerable size of the property and the extent of archaeological remains, excavation is deliberately limited. The overall topography of the tell, with its characteristic sequence of mounds and hollows, is still intact, thus preserving its original form.

The archaeological artefacts uncovered are exhibited at the Museum of Şanlıurfa, one of the largest archaeological museums in Turkey (inaugurated in 2015), where one entire floor is exclusively dedicated to Göbekli Tepe.

ICOMOS notes that the state of research is limited, and does not at present enable the precise determination of the nature of the site. The continuation of field research and the final publication of the various archaeological levels, stratigraphy and the various associated artefacts, should enable the determination of the precise nature of the property, to enable an understanding of the early stages of Neolithisation in the Middle East.

ICOMOS considers that there is an imbalance between the conditions necessary for scientific research, as presented in the nomination dossier, and the management plan.

ICOMOS also notes that financial commitments must be made concerning the continuation of the scientific research programmes in a medium and long term perspective. Although additional information has already been supplied by the State Party, it will be necessary to obtain a detailed plan of the archaeological programme currently under way, demonstrating how the proposed programme will address the debates about the nature of the property that are currently taking place among the scientific community.

In the additional information provided on 26 February 2018, the State Party has supplied the conservation plan for 2017-2021, but ICOMOS notes that it does not seem to cover the buffer zone. ICOMOS recommends that a conservation plan should be drawn up for the buffer zone and for the management zone.

According to the nomination dossier, the conservation activities put in place by the German Archaeological Institute (DAI) and Şanlıurfa Museum are as follows: conservation of prehistoric dry stone walls; conservation of lime plaster (*terrazzo*) floors; removal of dust and dirt from limestone surfaces; and renewal of the previously installed wooden supports of inclined monoliths.

ICOMOS notes that the nomination dossier provides no information about routine maintenance. As indicated in the management plan, ICOMOS emphasises that it is necessary to set up a maintenance team that is present throughout the year. Staffing levels will need to be increased.

Thanks to the decades of research and conservation conducted by the German Archaeological Institute (DAI), the property and its attributes are in a good state of conservation. According to the additional information provided by the State Party, the mandate of the German Archaeological Institute is set to end in 2021. The State Party indicates that the German Archaeological Institute's involvement in research will continue after this date, but provides no further information on this matter.

ICOMOS notes that the State Party is responsible for the conservation and upkeep of the property, but that the bulk of costs of research, archaeological excavations and conservation are met by the German Archaeological Institute, under an agreement signed with the Turkish Ministry for Culture and Tourism. More information must be provided to establish the basis for planning and implementing the conservation policy and plan if the German Archaeological Institute were to stop providing funding.

ICOMOS considers that the property conservation measures should be stepped up. In view of the limited state of research, ICOMOS recommends continuing the scientific research programmes in a medium and long term perspective, with dedicated funding. The conservation plan must cover both the buffer zone and the management zone, and include a more detailed archaeological programme and the putting in place of a maintenance team present at the site all year round.

Management

Management structures and processes, including traditional management processes

The institutional structure for implementing protection measures consists of the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MoCT) at national level, the Şanlıurfa Regional Council for Conservation of Cultural and Natural

Properties (at regional level), and Şanlıurfa Museum (at local level). The German Archaeological Institute (DAI) and the Site Management Unit will also be empowered to take action at regional and local level.

For the nominated property, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MoCT) granted an excavation permit to Şanlıurfa Museum from 1995 to 2006, to the German Archaeological Institute (DAI) and Harran University from 2007 to 2014, and, since 2014, to Şanlıurfa Museum in collaboration with the German Archaeological Institute (DAI). The Minister appoints an inspector in charge of supervising and ensuring that all scientific activities are conducted in accordance with Turkish law. Şanlıurfa Museum is the institution in charge of conservation and storage of the archaeological artefacts.

The Protection of Cultural and Natural Properties Law (Law 2863/1983) states that the excavation director is responsible for repairing, conserving and maintaining the moveable and immovable cultural property discovered during an excavation authorised by the Ministry. For all interventions on the property that are not linked to the excavation and to the research (e.g. any infrastructure projects), the competent authority is the Şanlıurfa Regional Council for Conservation of Cultural and Natural Properties.

Because of the status of the archaeological site, and its recent transformation into a heritage site, the Director of the Şanlıurfa Regional Council for Conservation of Cultural and Natural Properties has been appointed as the Site Manager. An Advisory Board, set up in 2016, examines the draft Management Plan and makes proposals for decision-making and the implementation of the plan. A Coordination and Audit Board, also set up in 2016, examines and approves the draft Master Plan.

An international multi-disciplinary team, directed in collaboration by the German Archaeological Institute and Şanlıurfa Museum, is in charge of the activities of archaeological research, conservation, promotion and site management. Additional training and expertise are provided by the Project's institutional partners, which include Harran University, Ludwig-Maximilian Universität Munich (Germany), Freie Universität Berlin (Germany), University of Applied Sciences Karlsruhe (Germany), McMaster University Toronto (Canada) and the University of Edinburgh (UK). Furthermore, the property is managed by employees of the General Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums, the Site Inspector and the staff of Şanlıurfa Museum. Local workers are employed on the excavation site. Four local security guards are employed at the site.

ICOMOS notes that the human resources in terms of personnel actually working onsite at the property outside the excavation seasons are not clearly indicated, except for the four security guards. The presence of a full-time manager based at the site all year round will be necessary, with responsibilities delegated by the official site manager, the Director of the Şanlıurfa Council for

Conservation of Cultural and Natural Heritage.

The additional information provided on 26 February 2018 stresses that efforts are being made to appoint a manager based at the site, who will be responsible for daily inspections of the archaeological monuments, the monitoring of visitor flows, coordination and the efficient implementation of the management system.

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

The management plan was drawn up in 2014, revised in 2016 and finalised in 2017.

The master plan sets out the required conservation measures, and the order of priority. ICOMOS notes however that more details must be provided about how these priorities and programmes will be implemented on the ground (and using which resources). As a matter of priority for the management plan, it is recommended that a full conservation plan be drawn up, with an associated action plan and dedicated financial resources.

The funding for the research project and for management comes mainly from the German Archaeological Institute (DAI) (via the German Research Foundation DFG) and from the Turkish Government.

Further funding resources stem from the Doğuş group, a Turkish holding company which brings together tourism and media companies, and is the official sponsor of the nominated property. Two shuttles for visitor transport have been funded, and a new visitor centre that is under construction. The State Party has stated that conservation measures are now funded by the Doğuş group, in collaboration with the General Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MoCT) and the German Archaeological Institute (DAI).

In the additional information received on 6 November 2017, the State Party indicates that after the end of the research project in collaboration with the German Archaeological Institute (DAI), new organisations will be sought for the funding of archaeological research, but no further details are provided. More details will be necessary about the prospects of funding specifically dedicated to archaeological research.

More details should be provided about the role of the decision makers and the scope of their action. While for the German Archaeological Institute it is officially stated that the emphasis will be placed on research up to 2021, the sponsorship of the Doğuş group and the composition of the advisory boards seem to be less clearly defined.

The additional information of 26 February 2018 indicates that the sponsorship of the Doğuş group enables it to obtain a reduction in corporate tax and other tax breaks, as the main sponsor of Göbekli Tepe.

ICOMOS considers that the nature of the sponsorship provided by the Doğuş group in the management process requires some clarification. For example, the Doğuş group does not seem to be considered as a major partner in the everyday running of the site, although it is creating a new logo and a new brand identity for the site. In the additional information, the State Party indicates that funding for conservation measures has been requested from the Doğuş group.

ICOMOS notes, however, that there seems to be a contradiction between the central role of the Doğuş group in some aspects of site management, such as communication and the conservation strategy, and its lack of involvement in the management process. ICOMOS considers that it would be useful to clarify the operational aspects of the relationship, in view of the long-term commitment and the importance of the Doğuş group in the sustainable management of the site.

A visitor centre, an interpretation and exhibition centre and parking areas have been set up outside the buffer zone and the nominated property. Inside the property, a rest area, a souvenir shop and service facilities for the personnel have been built.

ICOMOS considers that a detailed tourism management plan will be necessary to ensure the preservation of Outstanding Universal Value and archaeological potential.

The management plan and its implementation must cover not only the site itself, but also its immediate environs and the surrounding region, i.e. the buffer zone and the management zone, given that the development plan is linked to visits to the site.

In its additional information, the State Party indicates that regional and sub-regional plans already exist with sustainable tourism strategies in which the importance of the nominated property and its environment has been identified.

ICOMOS notes that projects that could affect the property's Outstanding Universal Value, such as construction and infrastructure projects (railway, motorway, etc.) inside the boundaries of the property, the buffer zone or the management zone, should be submitted to the World Heritage Centre at the earliest opportunity, in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*.

The nomination dossier does not describe any intervention plan to deal with foreseeable natural disaster risks (fires, storms, earthquakes) or with climate change. ICOMOS recommends that an appropriate risk preparation strategy should be drawn up for inclusion in the new management plan.

ICOMOS notes with concern the risk associated with the development of tourism, and the associated development of infrastructure around the property. ICOMOS recommends that a tourism strategy should be included in the management plan. All infrastructure development plans must be based on profound respect for, and understanding of, the site and its environs, in order to preserve the character of the place, its singularity and its authenticity.

Involvement of the local communities

ICOMOS stresses that the involvement of local communities in the various property management activities, such as the conservation of the environment of the property and the maintenance of the archaeological remains, should be considered.

In the additional information, the State Party indicates that local communities took part in the meetings held by the Site Management Unit and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MoCT) ahead of, and during, the preparation of the management plan. The local populations are also represented by the Coordination and Audit Board, and are directly involved in the archaeological field research at Göbekli Tepe. The State Party indicates that a basic socioeconomic study is planned as part of the management plan to assess the needs of local communities, without providing any further details.

ICOMOS considers that the management plan must be revised, and must include a comprehensive conservation plan (with an associated action plan and dedicated financial resources), as well as a maintenance work plan, a tourism management plan, and a plan for the management of risks (conflicts, natural disasters, climate change).

6 Monitoring

The key indicators for measuring the state of conservation are described in the nomination dossier, along with their periodicity and the location of the records. The monitoring of the property and the implementation of the management plan are performed by the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MoCT) at national level, the Şanlıurfa Regional Council for Conservation of Cultural and Natural Properties (at regional level), and Şanlıurfa Museum (at local level). The property is monitored by the Coordination and Audit Board of Şanlıurfa Museum and the German Archaeological Institute (DAI). The Şanlıurfa Regional Council for Conservation of Cultural and Natural Properties is also legally responsible for monitoring and evaluating projects for the conservation of the property. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MoCT) has set up a Site Management Unit that is responsible for preparing and monitoring the management plan.

The nomination dossier states that the key indicators for measuring the state of conservation are monitored annually, and that some field evaluations are monitored every two years. In view of the threats relating to the erosion and stability of the structures, ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation of the property should be monitored more frequently.

ICOMOS considers that the property monitoring system is adequate, but that the monitoring should take place on a more frequent basis.

7 Conclusions

The comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List; the nominated property meets criteria (i), (ii) and (iv) but the conditions of integrity and authenticity are extremely fragile.

As the site is being promoted as a major tourist destination in Turkey, infrastructure development projects are planned at Göbekli Tepe and in its environs (railway line, motorway, etc.). Inappropriate developments could adversely affect the property's Outstanding Universal Value, and its attractiveness as a tourist destination. ICOMOS considers that there is a threat amounting to an ascertained danger to the integrity of the property, pursuant to Paragraph 179 of the *Operational Guidelines*. The property faces serious threats which could have damaging effects on its essential characteristics, such as a weak conservation policy and threats resulting from land use projects.

In view of the fragility of the cultural attributes, the threats facing them and the lack of a comprehensive conservation plan (with an associated action plan and dedicated financial resources), ICOMOS considers that the property should be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (i), (ii) and (iv), and be inscribed simultaneously on the List of World Heritage in Danger. This should be considered as a way of drawing up a master plan so as to include a long-term approach to infrastructure development management in the interest of sustainable tourism, to also include a tourism management plan, and to reassess protection measures so as to preserve the visual identity and the archaeological potential of the nominated property, its buffer zone and its more extensive management zone.

8 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that Göbekli Tepe, Turkey, be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of **criteria (i), (ii) and (iv)**, and be simultaneously inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

ICOMOS also recommends that the State Party should invite a mission to visit the site as soon as possible, to agree on a desired state of conservation with a view to removing the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger, based on the cultural attributes of Outstanding Universal Value, and which must be achieved by means of a master plan so as to manage the development of infrastructure for sustainable tourism. Above all, it is essential to protect the property from inappropriate development, thanks to planning and “development control”. It is crucial to preserve the character of the place and its singularity, and to reconcile heritage conservation and the demand for development.

Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Brief synthesis

Göbekli Tepe is located in Upper Mesopotamia, a region which saw the emergence of the most ancient farming communities in the world. Monumental structures, interpreted as enclosures, were erected by groups of hunter-gatherers in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic period (10th-9th millennia BC). The monuments were probably used in connection with public rituals, probably of a funerary nature. Distinctive T-shaped pillars are carved with a rich array of images, mainly of wild animals. Recent excavations have also enabled the identification of a nearby built structure of lesser architectural complexity of what might be termed domestic structures.

Criterion (i): The communities that built the monumental megalithic structures of Göbekli Tepe lived at the time of one of the most momentous transitions in human history, from the way of life of hunter-gatherer subsistence to that of the first farmers. These architectural feats bear witness to the creative genius of Pre-Pottery Neolithic societies.

Criterion (ii): Göbekli Tepe is one of the first manifestations of human-made monumental architecture, and its building techniques (semi-subterranean architecture with pillars) and its imagery were disseminated and replicated at other sites in the Middle East from the earliest Neolithic periods, PPNA and PPNB, onwards.

Criterion (iv): Göbekli Tepe is an outstanding example of an ensemble of monumental megalithic structures illustrating a significant period of human history. The monolithic T-shaped pillars were carved from the adjacent limestone plateau and attest to new levels of architectural and engineering technology. They are

believed to bear witness to the presence of specialised craftsmen, and possibly the emergence of more hierarchical forms of human society.

Integrity

Göbekli Tepe contains all the elements necessary for the expression of its Outstanding Universal Value. Recent infrastructure projects are concentrated around the southern boundaries of the management zone. The electricity pylons and the road network are visible, as are the irrigation channels to the south, and a limestone quarry north of the village of Örencik. Future development projects (railway line, motorway) and the increase in tourist numbers likely to be generated are currently causing very serious concern, making the property's integrity vulnerable.

Authenticity

The megalithic structures have largely retained the original form and design of their architectural elements, together with numerous decorative elements and craft works that provide an insight into the way of life of the societies that occupied the site. The results of more than twenty years of research and archaeological excavations on the site testify to its authenticity. The excavations under way and their analysis since the mid-1990s also provide a more balanced and detailed view of the relationship between the various aspects of usage and the prehistoric importance of the property. Future development projects and the limited nature of the documentation concerning the buffer zone and the management zone mean that authenticity is vulnerable.

Management and protection requirements

Göbekli Tepe is legally protected by Law 2863/1983 on the protection of the cultural and natural environment, amended in 1987 and 2004. In 2005, the tell and the limestone plateau were inscribed as a 1st Degree Conservation Area by the decision of the Diyarbakır Council for Conservation of the Cultural and Natural Environment. In 2016, the buffer zone was registered as a 3rd Degree Conservation Area, by the decision of the Şanlıurfa Council for Conservation of the Cultural and Natural Heritage.

The institutional framework for the implementation of the protection measures consists at national level of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, at regional level of the Şanlıurfa Council for Conservation of the Cultural and Natural Heritage, and at local level of Şanlıurfa Museum. Since 2014 the Ministry of Culture and Tourism has granted an excavation permit to Şanlıurfa Museum in collaboration with the German Archaeological Institute (DAI).

The management plan was drawn up in 2015, revised in 2016 and finalised in 2017. Because of the property's status as an archaeological site and its recent transformation into a heritage site, the Director of Şanlıurfa Council for Conservation of Cultural and Natural Heritage has been appointed as the manager of

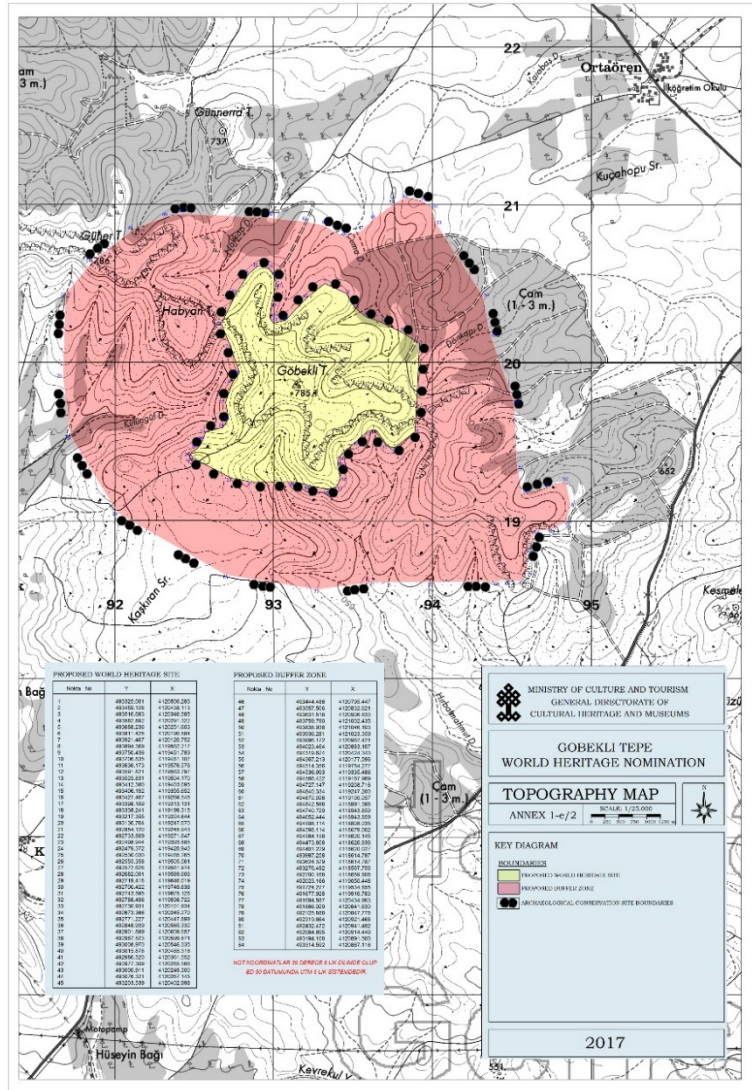
the property. An Advisory Board, set up in 2016, examines the management plan and submits proposals for decision-making and the implementation of the plan. A Coordination and Audit Board, also set up in 2016, examines and approves the draft master plan.

f) Submit to the World Heritage Centre by 1st December 2018 a report on the implementation of the recommendations set out above for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 43rd session in 2019;

Additional recommendations

ICOMOS also recommends that the State Party give urgent consideration to the following points:

- a) Closely monitor developments around the site that threaten the landscape and visual integrity, and the archaeological potential, of the site. This includes monitoring the visual impact of possible “compulsory infrastructure” and measures to protect the agricultural land in the plain of Harran,
- b) Carry out a study of the impact on the property of the proposed railway line at the site and of its development before its construction, and communicate the study to the World Heritage Centre in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*,
- c) Take measures to ensure that the landscape treatment of the irrigation channel, in the management zone and in the south-east of the site, is implemented so as to reduce its visual impact. Options should also be explored to reduce the visual impact of the quarry in the west,
- d) Strengthen the protection measures for the buffer zone by making it into a 1st Degree Conservation Area,
- e) Develop the management plan so as to:
 - o include a full conservation plan (including an associated action plan and dedicated resources),
 - o include a maintenance work plan,
 - o appoint a manager based at the site all year round,
 - o include a long-term approach for the management of infrastructure development. Infrastructure must be adapted to allow for the future development of sustainable tourism, without damaging the site’s Outstanding Universal Value,
 - o finalise the detailed tourism management plan as an important and integral part of the property management system, with a schedule for its implementation,
 - o include a risk preparation plan,



Map showing the boundaries of the nominated property



Aerial view of Göbekli Tepe



Building, 10th-9th mill. BC