

# WORLD HERITAGE

## GENDER EQUALITY

**Virunga National Park**  
First female rangers

**Kii Mountain Range**  
Mountains divided

**Mount Athos**  
A man's world

**Flemish Béguinages**  
Spiritual communities

**Kasubi Tombs**  
Women guardians



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World  
Heritage  
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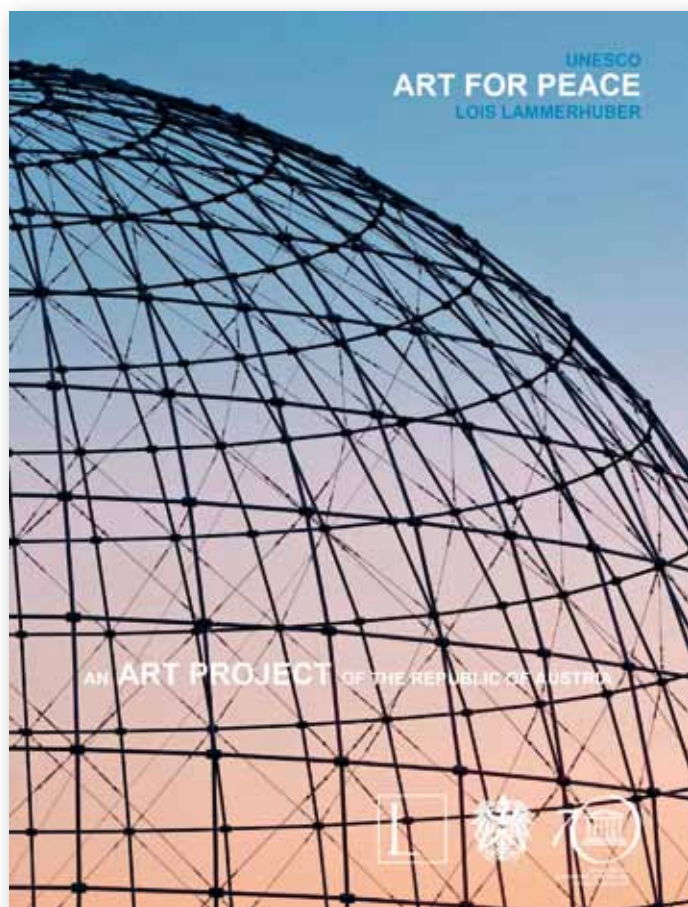


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## Art for Peace



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Cover: Ranger Xaverine Mwamini Biriko, Virunga National Park (Democratic Republic of the Congo).

It is increasingly recognized that culture has an essential role to play as a driver of sustainable development, contributing to the eradication of poverty and enhancing social inclusion. Culture helps to define people's identities and determines the way they shape their future. Gender equality, which is a UNESCO priority, refers to the roles and responsibilities of men and women and gender dynamics within families, societies and cultures.

In many respects, UNESCO World Heritage sites are prime examples of setting standards and sharing practices around the world, and this issue examines the role of gender in many aspects of heritage, whether it involves the spiritual beliefs underpinning the functions of a place, the roles of the women and men at a site, or even whether men or women are allowed access. Moreover, the scope of the World Heritage Convention is vast, and with 1,031 sites now listed, there is no shortage of examples of the different ways men and women live, work and pray in different cultures.

In this issue, we begin with a broad overview that looks at gender bias in the early days of the World Heritage Convention, male/female parity in examining nominations, and attributed gender roles in the preservation of World Heritage sites. We look closely at certain World Heritage sites, such as the Tombs of Buganda Kings at Kasubi (Uganda) where women are the caretakers of the sacred site; the Kii Mountain Range in Japan, with its separate access to mountains for men or women only; the spiritual communities of women in the Flemish Béguinages of Belgium; the Orthodox centre of Mount Athos (Greece), where women and children are not allowed; and Virunga National Park (Democratic Republic of the Congo), now home to the first female rangers in this area. Gender and the 2003 Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention is another topic, reflecting on how gender is commonly expressed, performed and even constituted in and through intangible cultural heritage.

The cases presented illustrate the diversity of cultures, beliefs and practices that are exercised around the world, and the roles that gender plays in just a few of them. With the sustainable development policy adopted by the General Assembly of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention in November 2015, we look towards a more peaceful and sustainable planet – the balance of power in our relationships will continue to be an important issue to redress in this new framework.

M. Rössler

**Mechtild Rössler**  
Director of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre



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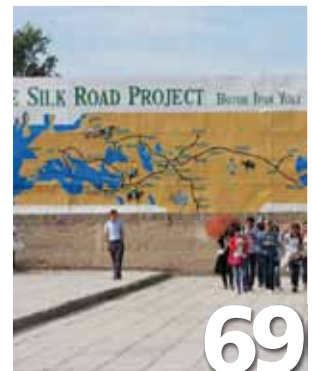
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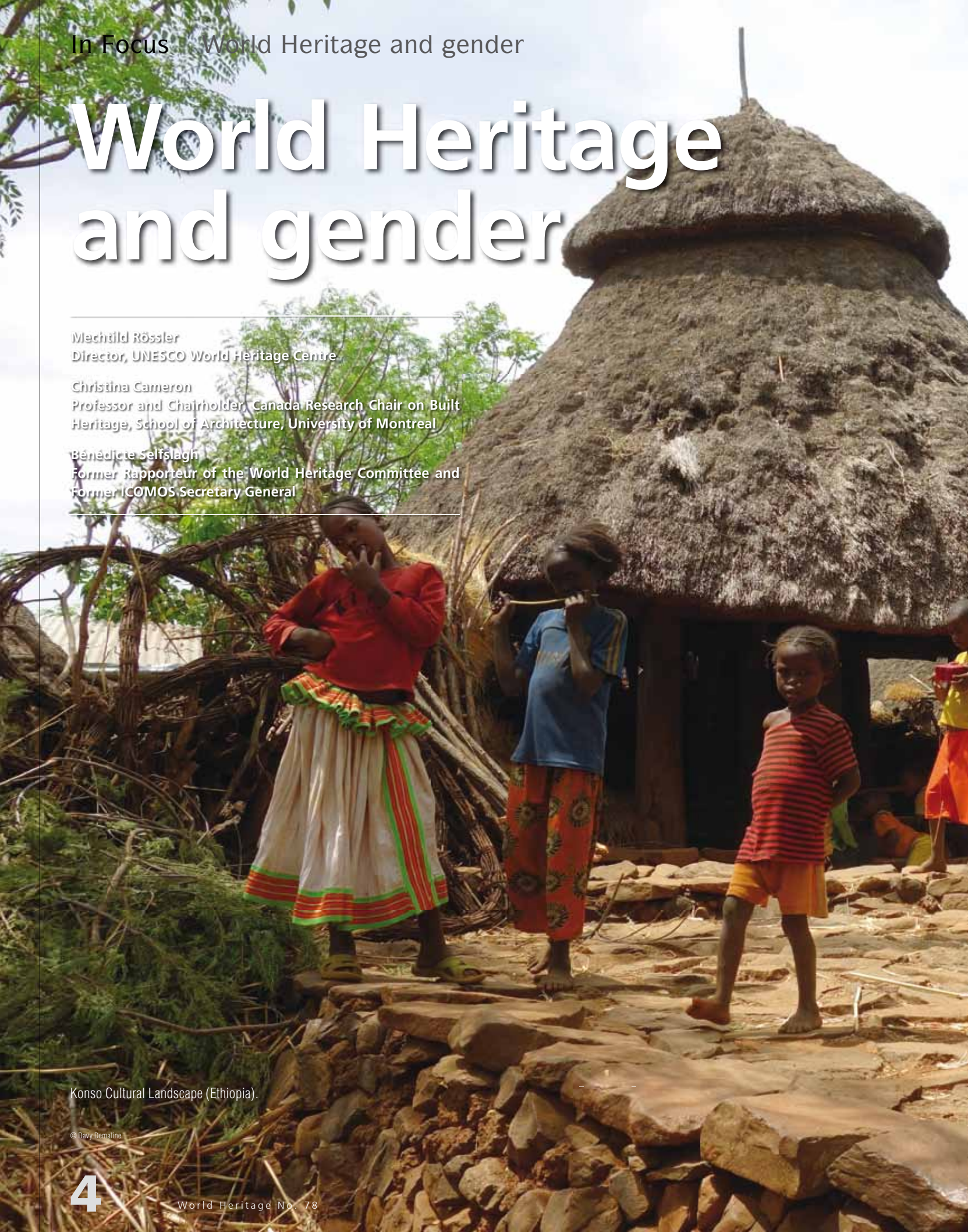


# World Heritage and gender

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Konso Cultural Landscape (Ethiopia).

© Davy Demaline



This issue on World Heritage and gender covers the subject from various perspectives, including the evolution of ideas as well as the nomination and conservation of World Heritage sites. In its diverse cultural expressions and natural phenomena, World Heritage is a construct, a response in the 1970s by international experts, politicians and government representatives to a growing concern about 'the cultural heritage and the natural heritage ... increasingly threatened with destruction not only by the traditional causes of decay, but also by changing social and economic conditions which aggravate the situation with even more formidable phenomena of damage or destruction' (UNESCO, 1972, preamble). The response led to the creation of an international system to safeguard global heritage sites for future generations.

Several case studies in this issue demonstrate power and gender relationships that have emerged in the World Heritage system. In a recent publication, the United Nations Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights, Farida Shaheed, writes in her introduction to *Gender Equality, Heritage and Creativity* that 'culture is in constant motion and is always linked to power relations' (UNESCO, 2014). By implication, the construction of World Heritage through its identification, evaluation, inscription and conservation processes is also related to power relations in society.

### Discovering World Heritage

For millennia, people have cared about unique and special monuments and sites as demonstrated by the listing of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, one of which still survives and is inscribed on the World Heritage List as Memphis and its Necropolis – the Pyramid Fields from Giza to Dahshur (Egypt). It is usually men who are identified as explorers and discoverers of exceptional places. A recent study gives evidence that men are believed to possess

more of the characteristics that are culturally valued, whatever those characteristics are, than women (Cuddy et al., 2015). What this might mean for World Heritage needs to be researched. In the case of discovering World Heritage, many women were also great explorers, although their stories were often hidden and have only recently come to light.



The listing of the lines and geoglyphs of Nasca and Pampas de Jumana (Peru) would not have been possible without Maria Reiche's fundamental research.

© Christian Haugen

### The process for identifying World Heritage sites may be influenced by power relations or gender bias.

How many people know about Anna Maria Sibylla Merian (1647–1717) who began in 1699 to document the natural diversity of Suriname, laying the groundwork for botanical research relevant today for the World Heritage site of the Suriname Nature Reserve? Or the intrepid adventurer Alexandra David Néel (1868–1969), the first Western woman to enter Lhasa and record her impressions of the Historic Ensemble of the Potala Palace? Or zoologist Diane Fossey (1932–1985) and primatologist Jane Goodall (born 1934), who both contributed to the conservation of the natural environment of the mountain gorillas and chimpanzees in Africa?

The World Heritage property of the Lines and Geoglyphs of Nasca and Pampas de Jumana (Peru) would not have been understood without the investigative work of Maria Reiche (1903–1998). Beginning in 1932, this German mathematician dedicated her life to archaeological and astronomical research as well as to the cartography of the more than 13,000 lines in the desert. The listing of the Nasca lines would have not been possible without Maria Reiche's fundamental research. Today her works are on display in the National Museum of Nasca.

### Gender bias in the early days of the Convention

The process for identifying World Heritage sites may be influenced by power relations or gender bias. World Heritage designation relies on a comprehensive understanding of the Outstanding Universal Value of a site. Over the years, this fundamental concept has been dissected and debated. In the draft *Operational Guidelines* of 1977, the year before the first sites were inscribed on the World Heritage List, a nuanced definition was proposed for cultural heritage:

'The definition of "universal" in the phrase "outstanding universal value" requires comment. Some properties may not be recognized by all people, everywhere, to be of great importance and significance. Opinions may vary from one culture or period to another. As far as cultural property is concerned, the term "universal" must be interpreted as referring to a property which is highly representative of the culture of which it forms part' (UNESCO, 1977, p. 3).

This definition suggests that interpretations may vary from culture to culture and, by extension, they may also be 'gendered' in the sense that they may reflect power relations within a given culture or society. Power relations may in fact affect the focus of research and understanding in nomination files submitted by States Parties for consideration by the World Heritage Committee.

Evidence that gender balance and the achievements of both men and women were not part of early World Heritage



**The intrepid adventurer Alexandra David Néel (1868–1969) was the first Western woman to enter Lhasa and record her impressions of the Historic Ensemble of the Potala Palace.**



Enclosed within massive walls, gates and turrets built of rammed earth and stone, the White and Red Palaces and ancillary buildings of the Potala Palace (China) rise from Red Mountain in the centre of Lhasa Valley at an altitude of 3,700 m.

© Tommy@Chau



Ifugao women at the Rice Terraces of the Philippine Cordilleras (Philippines).

© Jacques Beaulieu

discourse may be found in the 1979 report by French architect and ICOMOS President Michel Parent. In his study, Parent noted that the evaluation of cultural heritage necessarily involved subjective elements and that therefore comparative assessment of nominations was essential. Further, in an unconscious revelation of gender bias, he wrote about a proposal from the United States to inscribe inventor Thomas Edison's house:

'The nomination of the Edison Site gives the Committee an opportunity to examine the principle of including in the List sites associated with great scholars, artists, writers or statesmen – the "Great Men" of history. Many great men – especially great conquerors – have left their mark on a series of different places. We should, I think, avoid letting the List become a sort of competitive Honours Board for the famous men of different countries. The letter of the Convention does not rule out such a possibility, but it is a question of basic expediency that the List, before it can be considered as exhaustive, must concentrate not so much on the endless places which have been the theatre of the passing glories of *men* (artists and other alike), as on the great *works* which they have created' (UNESCO, 1979, p. 22).

There are rare examples in the early years of World Heritage inscriptions that make specific references to men.

Three cases serve as illustrations, namely the inscription of Galápagos Islands (Ecuador) in 1978 which celebrates scientist Charles Darwin, the listing of the Works of Antoni Gaudí (Spain) in 1984 and the inscription of Brasília (Brazil) in 1987 which prominently features urban planner Lucio Costa and architect Oscar Niemeyer. As part of an anthropological shift in the implementation of the Convention, the adoption in 1994 of the Global Strategy for a Representative, Balanced and Credible World Heritage List gave precedence to communities over the 'great men of history'.

### Men/women parity in evaluating nominations

As set out in the World Heritage Convention, nominations receive intensive technical evaluation by two international organizations, the International Union for

Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS). One area that has benefited from detailed analysis is the choice of technical experts for site missions. Following independent evaluations of each Advisory Body in 2005 and 2010 respectively, gender imbalance emerged as a possible bias in this part of the World Heritage system.



Casa Batlló (Spain) by Gaudí is one of the rare examples in the early years of World Heritage inscriptions that make specific references to men.

© Massimo Mastroiandro

In the case of IUCN, the external evaluator noted that 'the roster of evaluators appears to lack regional and gender balance.' The findings, covering the period 2001–2004, revealed a dramatic gender imbalance with thirty-three of the thirty-four evaluators being male. The report noted that while a direct link between gender imbalance and site evaluations was difficult to make, 'it is hard to avoid the impression that evaluators belong to an exclusive club' (Cameron, 2005, p. 8). In response to this observation, IUCN has taken steps to ensure a better participation of women in field missions.

The external evaluation of ICOMOS also found a significant gender imbalance in the choice of mission experts. While noting that the proportion was less dramatic than in IUCN, the report nonetheless concludes that for the period 2006–2009 'men/women parity in the breakdown of ICOMOS experts is a long

way from being achieved, as 70 per cent of the experts are men' (Tabet, 2010, p. 24, Table 5). In its response, ICOMOS agreed that 'the question of gender "balance" can be given more consideration in the future, as one of several factors influencing the selection [of experts]. To assist this, the World Heritage Unit of the ICOMOS International Secretariat will be requested to keep statistics on the gender of experts selected each year so that this can be more specifically monitored' (ibid., p. 83).

### The roles of women and men in conserving World Heritage

Following inscription, World Heritage sites continue to function within their communities, as encouraged by the World Heritage Convention (UNESCO, 1972, Article 5). As a result, some properties are used in ways that raise gender issues. For example, sacred sites often carry out rituals that differentiate between the roles of women and men. A case that concerned the World Heritage Committee occurred during the inscription of Mount Athos (Greece) in 1988. The Committee questioned the validity of inscribing a site to the World Heritage List if half the world's population was excluded because of gender. Founded in 1054, Mount Athos is an Orthodox spiritual centre which is forbidden to women and children (see p. 12).

Some World Heritage properties have specific documented management systems to recognize the rights of stakeholders to perform their rituals. Examples include sacred forests such as the Osun-Osoybo Sacred Grove (Nigeria) and sacred sites such as Sulaiman-Too Sacred Mountain (Kyrgyzstan) and the Great Burkhan Khaldun Mountain and its surrounding sacred landscape (Mongolia). Other places have cosmological and traditional significance for indigenous peoples, such as Papahānaumokuākea (United States), Kakadu National Park (Australia), and Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park (Australia). There are also sites of sacred significance to local communities, such as Konso Cultural Landscape (Ethiopia) and Sacred Mijikenda Kaya Forests (Kenya). Ceremonies in such sites are often separated by gender –

women and men do not perform the same rituals nor do they use the same spaces.

The same is true for the many monumental religious buildings on the World Heritage List, such as the cathedrals of Chartres (France) and Speyer (Germany), the Birthplace of Jesus: Church of the Nativity and the Pilgrimage Route, Bethlehem (Palestine) and the Orthodox Monastery of the Saint Catherine Area (Egypt). Depending on specific religious practices, such sites may not be accessible to everyone during certain times. In some cases, use is divided by gender, with different spaces allocated to men and to women to perform specific religious duties.

A similar situation exists for many cultural landscapes where women and men play different roles in the conservation and use of these places. *World Heritage: Benefits Beyond Borders* (Galla, 2012) documents these different roles at the Rice Terraces of the Philippine Cordilleras (Philippines). The Ifugao people are a matrilinear society and fields are transmitted from generation to generation. Gender-specific tasks are evident throughout the rice production processes: men prepare the land for planting and women harvest the rice from the rice paddies. For this World Heritage site, as for a number of others, an element of the intangible heritage – the Hudhud or narrative chants – has also been recognized through the 2003 UNESCO Convention on the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. At the property, tangible and intangible heritage as well as men's and women's roles are closely intertwined (Mananghaya, 2012, p. 187).

Women often have less income and fewer benefits from economic activity at World Heritage sites. *World Heritage: Benefits Beyond Borders* reports that on International Women's Day in 2012 a gathering of women at Chief Roi Mata's Domain (Vanuatu) discussed the topic of sustainable livelihoods and the role of women in community development. Sustainable tourism initiatives at World Heritage sites have the potential to enhance benefits particularly to women and to enable them to generate income through provision

of accommodation, traditional handicrafts, artistic performances and local food production (Galla, 2012, pp. 173–5). With their different knowledge and transmission systems, women can contribute to a better understanding of the values of heritage places and their environment. Such an approach is fundamental to the long-term sustainability of World Heritage sites. Moreover, it ensures authentic visitor experiences and a dialogue among cultures.



Depending on specific religious practices, sites such as the Birthplace of Jesus: Church of the Nativity and the Pilgrimage Route, Bethlehem (Palestine), may not be accessible to women at certain times.

© Krebsmaus07

Interpretive programmes offer opportunities to highlight the contribution of women to the history and development of World Heritage sites. Their visitor centres and museums increasingly focus on the comprehensive interpretation of these special places in their historical and socio-economic context. An example is the interpretation centre at Blaenavon Industrial Landscape (United Kingdom), located at the former St. Peter's School founded in 1816 to educate the ironworkers' children. It offers not only an overview of the World Heritage property but also educational workshops, focusing on the lives of local people, women and men, from the early Celts through to modern days. Industrial sites in particular benefit from an appropriate interpretation

of the different lives and work of women and men.

### World Heritage and human rights

In the foreword to *Gender Equality, Heritage and Creativity*, Farida Shaheed argues that 'the realization of equal cultural rights demands that women and girls are able to access, participate in, and contribute to all aspects of cultural life on a basis of equality with men and boys. This includes the right to equally determine and interpret cultural heritage; decide which cultural traditions, values or practices are to be kept intact; which are to be retained but modified, and which are to be discarded altogether. The right to participation includes the right not to participate in any ritual, custom or practice which contravenes human dignity of girls and women, regardless of cultural justifications' (UNESCO, 2014).

On the initiative of ICOMOS Norway, the three Advisory Bodies to World Heritage, ICCROM, ICOMOS and IUCN, are cooperating to collect case studies on human rights issues in World Heritage sites with the goal of building capacity for a rights-based approach (Ekern et al., 2012). The aim is to ensure that communities and human rights are properly taken into account when potential World Heritage sites are identified, during the nomination process, and following inscription on the World Heritage List. While this rights-based approach does not focus specifically on gender issues or gender balance, it will undoubtedly touch on them.

This issue of *World Heritage* aims to foster better understanding and awareness of gendered roles in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention. In so doing, it contributes to UNESCO's goal of constructing the defences of peace in the minds of women and men. It is timely for the international community to recognize the differences between men's and women's attributed roles in societies throughout history and how these are made manifest in the sphere of World Heritage. Through understanding of expressions of cultural diversity, lasting peace can be built. ☺



Blaenavon Industrial Landscape (United Kingdom) is a testimony of the different lives and work of women and men in the 19th century.

© Amanderson 2

## Achieving gender equality

23. Gender equality is one of UNESCO's two global priorities. The UNESCO Priority Gender Equality Action Plan (2014–2021), moreover, requires Member States and the governing bodies of UNESCO regulatory instruments "to establish gender-sensitive, gender-responsive and gender-transformative policies and practices in the field of heritage". In addition, achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls is essential for achieving sustainable development, and is one of the post-2015 sustainable development goals. Therefore, States Parties should:
- i. Ensure respect for gender equality throughout the full cycle of World Heritage processes, particularly in the preparation and content of nomination dossiers;
  - ii. Ensure social and economic opportunities for both women and men in and around World Heritage properties;
  - iii. Ensure equal and respectful consultation, full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership and representation of both women and men within activities for the conservation and management of World Heritage properties;
  - iv. When or where relevant, ensure that gender-rooted traditional practices within World Heritage properties, for example in relation to access or participation in management mechanisms, have received the full consent of all groups within the local communities through transparent consultation processes that fully respects gender equality.

Extract from *Policy Document for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the Processes of the World Heritage Convention*

20th session of the General Assembly of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, 18–20 November 2015

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# Mount Athos – more than just a man's world

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Thymio Papayannis  
Mediterranean Institute for Nature and Anthropos (Med-INA)

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The "Holy mountain", a spiritual centre since the 10th century and a sanctuary forbidden to women, Athos has enjoyed an autonomous statute since Byzantine times.

© Our Place – The World Heritage Collection





Founded during the 13th century by Simon the Athonite, the Simonopetra Monastery consists of several multi-storey buildings.

© Simonopetra Monastery

**I**t is four in the morning. Outside, the star-filled sky cannot pierce the utter darkness. Inside the monastery church the first monks are gathering. One by one, the black-robed men bend before the icons, and then take their places at standing prayer pews. The first psalms rise up. The dark church is barely illuminated by a candle. As the service proceeds, the chanting swells. The illumination intensifies with further candles and lamps, while the monks move in the patterns of an ancient Byzantine tradition.

We are in the monastic State of Athos, and it really is a state apart. While life here is simple and human in dimension, it looks towards heaven and the divine. The people and the place have combined to create a community inexplicable by society's criteria; it lives in the world, yet is not of the world. Its very existence is intended to bear witness to the fact that there are matters beyond our understanding: one of its names is the Garden of the Holy Virgin, a reference to the Garden of Eden. It symbolizes the mystery of the eternal future, a mystical journey between heaven and earth: the perfection

to which the monastic life aspires is that of the angels surrounding God's throne.

The Holy Mountain has survived, advanced and functioned now for centuries on its own principles, laws and rules, within its own tradition. In essence, here the people take the lead, and any practical issues only follow.

### Origins of Mount Athos

The easternmost of the three peninsulas of Chalcidice in northern Greece is known worldwide as Aghion Oros (Holy Mountain), guiding light of Orthodox Christianity. Since the end of the first millennium it has hosted a large, entirely male, monastic community, organized under the principles of early monasticism.

From the 9th century ascetics had gathered there, and it was acknowledged after 1054 as a vital spiritual centre within the Byzantine Empire after the disappearance of other monastic centres (in Egypt, Syria and Asia Minor). It has been protected continuously since then, as demonstrated by official documents and decisions of emperors, rulers and patriarchs, retaining its pivotal role even after the fall of Constantinople in 1453.

Since then, the Holy Mountain became – and remains today – the largest community and spiritual home of Greek Orthodoxy, embracing monks within its shores from every Orthodox nation. 'We can describe the Athos Polity as the largest isolated living monastic community, serving the world by offering the strength of life, grace, spiritual wealth and active prayer, reaching heavenwards in every way for the redemption of all mankind.'

### Special circumstances and international significance

Mount Athos has been granted a special status with regard to its operation and management. This was recognized internationally for the first time in the Berlin Treaty of 1878, before the liberation of Thessaloniki and the incorporation of Chalcidice – including Mount Athos – into the Greek State in 1912. Since then, Mount Athos has maintained a clear self-governing status, which was formally recognized in the Greek constitution of 1927 and the treaty by which Greece joined the European Union.

Towards the end of the 1980s, in recognition of the areas' uniqueness,





Chilandar Monastery environment.

© Thymio Papayannis

the Greek Ministry of Culture, through the country's permanent delegation at UNESCO, decided to propose that Mount Athos be inscribed on the World Heritage List, both for its natural beauty and its cultural importance.<sup>2</sup>

According to the 1988 decision to include the site on the List, its Outstanding Universal Value stems principally from the creation of a sacred site, the distinctive and timeless architecture of its buildings, harmoniously incorporated within an exceptional natural environment in a region of outstanding beauty.

The unique heritage of this holy place is supplemented by a great wealth of manuscripts and documents, books, icons and other religious objects.

### Past and present management

All of the above is well known to those who have any interest in the Holy Mountain. The decisive role of the region's religious traditions may be less familiar and is perhaps worthy of further consideration. The spiritual path followed here, laid out in centuries of profound philosophical thought, is characterized by restraint and the respectful

use of natural resources; this leads directly to practices, methods and an overall approach to the management of agriculture, forestry and wild areas on the Athos peninsula which can be considered sustainable, according to modern science. The exceptional condition of the Mediterranean forests on the peninsula is a notable example of sustainable management, stemming naturally from the harmonious relationship between the ascetic life and agricultural and felling practices, as well as the supporting infrastructure.

The unique nature of Mount Athos can thus be seen as an example of wise management of an exceptionally sensitive region, with great natural wealth and cultural heritage, by a purely male monastic community which has maintained its principles and traditions for over a thousand years.

After a millennium of existence, a monastic community like this one, especially one located in the European Union and on the fast-developing shores of the Mediterranean, might expect to weaken. The reverse is true: the number of monks is increasing, while the spiritual influence of the Holy Mountain can be felt across and

even beyond the borders of the twenty or so countries where Orthodox communities can be found.

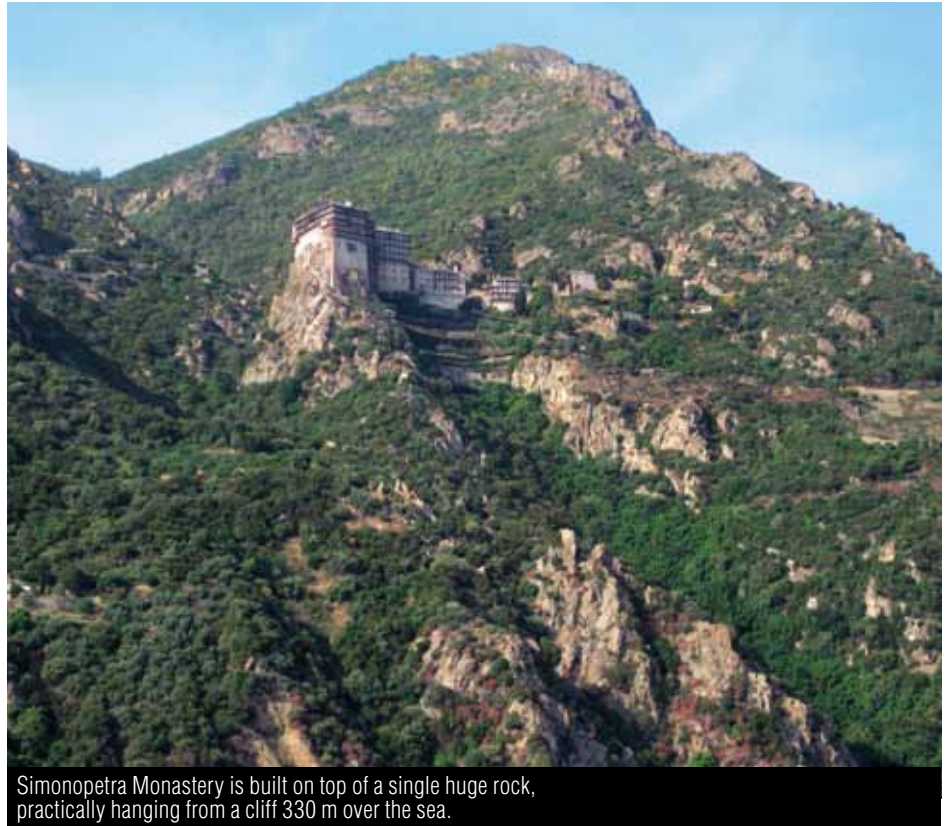
This should not be understood to mean that this is an area without difficulties and threats. The Athos peninsula is part of the Greek State and is unavoidably affected by the catastrophic financial and social developments in the rest of the country. In parallel, the region's environmental problems (such as pollution from liquid and solid waste, inadequately planned road building, the construction of buildings and infrastructure, forest fires, increased energy consumption and the effects of climate change) have intensified over recent decades and require an immediate response.

Since 2006, the UNESCO World Heritage Committee has maintained that the appropriate response to the site's major problems requires a comprehensive management programme for its cultural and natural heritage, and indeed necessitates the active participation of the monastic community, acting through its governing bodies. In the decade which followed this proposal, some positive steps were taken in this respect, but very slowly.

The delay may stem from disagreement within the community, as well as from a predictable concern that the introduction of new and 'foreign' concepts might threaten the preservation of its traditions. In this context, it should be noted that the whole peninsula is historically divided between twenty monasteries, each of which supervises the shelters (*sketae*), smaller houses and cells within its grounds. Each monastery is therefore autonomous within its area and only wider issues that concern the overall administration of Mount Athos (such as road building, vehicular access, management of pilgrims and visitors) come within the purview of the Holy Community.

According to one view, the broad management programme proposed by UNESCO could lead to restrictions that could threaten not only the self-governing status of Mount Athos but also the monasteries' overarching rights to manage their own sites. The opposite opinion, however, is that if the Holy Community took charge of the management of the Athos heritage site, it would reconfirm its historic role, especially within the scope of an international treaty. In this manner it could more effectively secure the monastic traditions of Athos, while adapting them where needed to changing circumstances. This latter view is supported by the fact that the Holy Community's coordination role has been strengthened over the last few years, and it has become more widely accepted that cooperation and joint action is more effective in responding to common problems, without necessarily diminishing each monastery's autonomy.

In any case, interaction and discussions over the last decade have brought all the institutions involved to a better understanding and acceptance of the principles guiding the management of a World Heritage site by a male Orthodox monastic community.<sup>3</sup> These principles coincide with those of communal Orthodox monasticism itself, and include the unceasing devotion to practice and prayer, frugality in all aspects of daily life, and freedom from worldly shackles and diversions (familial, financial and political), as well as from personal possessions in a spirit of brotherhood and collegiality. It is certain that, through these discussions and the search for consensus, positive decisions can be taken which will advance the integrated management of the Athos peninsula by the



Simonopetra Monastery is built on top of a single huge rock, practically hanging from a cliff 330 m over the sea.

© Simonopetra Monastery

Holy Community. Little significance should be given to any delay, either in reaching those decisions or in the implementation of the programme, as the monks of Mount Athos live with the past, which for them forms a continuous part of their present and future, expanding time while engaging actively in 'the great mystery surpassing all things'.<sup>4</sup>

### The *avaton* of Mount Athos

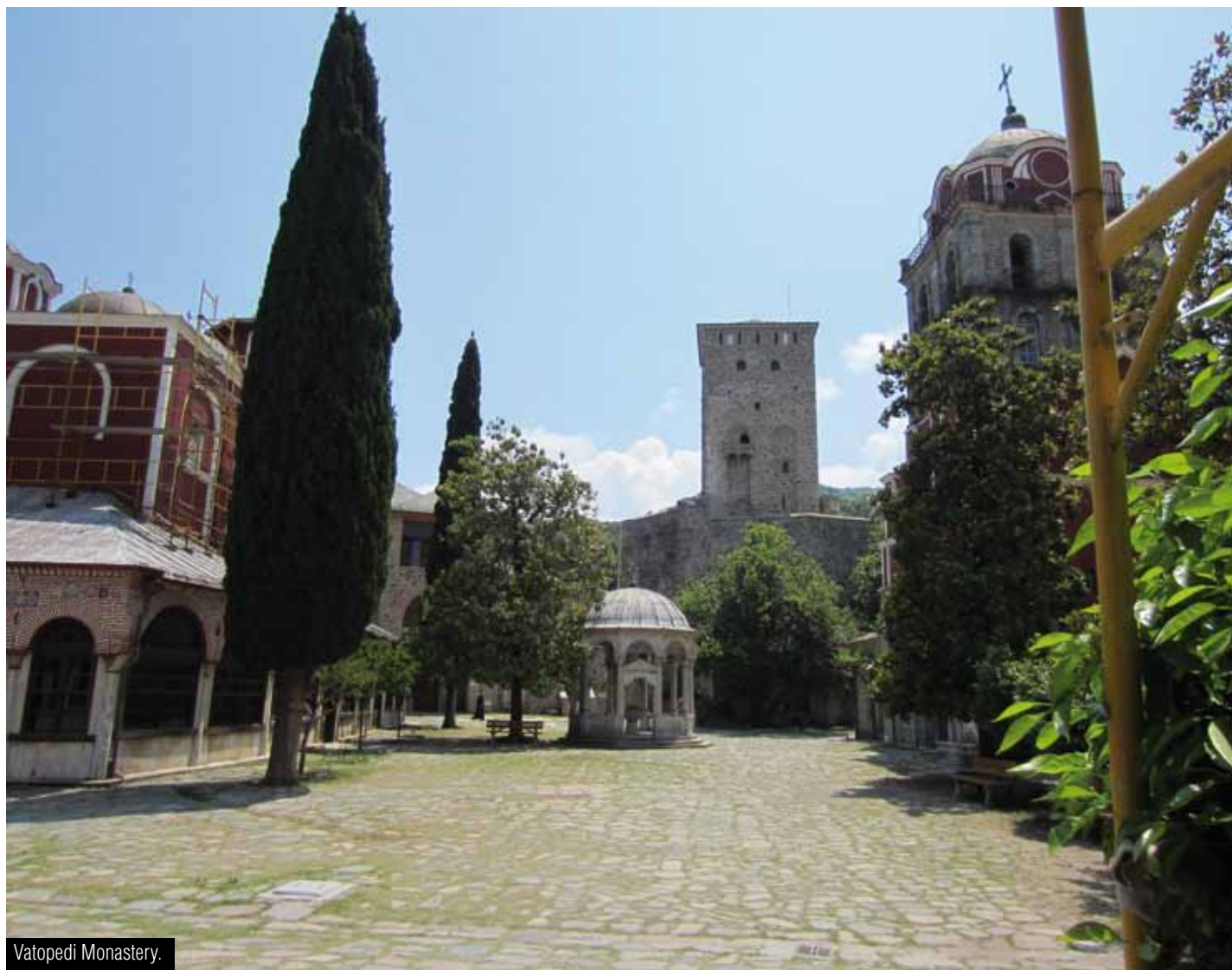
One of the strongest traditions in Mount Athos is the hospitality shown to pilgrims and visitors. This requires both management and spiritual consideration, as the Athos Peninsula cannot be treated as a tourist destination. It is a self-governing area of isolation and prayer, and for this reason the Holy Community has limited the number of visitors, attempting to distribute them appropriately between the monasteries.

A thornier question, which has given rise to both disputes and demands over the years, is the concept of *avaton*, which means literally 'not to be walked on' or 'inviolability'. It is not only an ancient practice, but also a fundamental approach to the order of monastic life, applicable in particular to the

rule which forbids women from entering or staying on Mount Athos. The rule stems formally from a decree issued by Emperor Constantine the Gladiator in 1046 and has been respected in practice ever since.

The concept of *avaton*, however, has a wider meaning, constituting a principle expressing the nature of the Holy Mountain; it can be more precisely defined as the rules that keep the ascetic use of cultural means and the wise preservation of a distinctive and fragile place. The concept of *avaton* is not an ideology and should not be seen as discriminatory, but relates to the options by which a place is chosen for monastic life and the worship of God.

In its communication of 16 January 2003, the Holy Community emphasized that 'the concept of *avaton* should not be seen as an isolated practice, but as one of the many facets which together constitute the special nature of Mount Athos. These facets cannot be addressed separately, but only as a unified whole which has shaped the unique character and spiritual life which is now the object of universal admiration'. In a similar declaration of 30 September 2003, the Holy Community notes that 'one



Vatopedi Monastery.

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Entrance to Stavronikita Monastery.

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Karakallou Monastery.

© Simonopetra Monastery



Chilandar Monastery Church is one of the twenty Orthodox monasteries on Mount Athos.

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Simonopetra Monastery is located on the southern coast of the Mount Athos peninsula.

© Simonopetra Monastery

of the impressive aspects of Mount Athos is that the rule of *avaton* is applied uniformly by twenty monasteries under a common administrative body on a peninsula clearly distinguishable on the map, and extending right across the entire peninsula, given that it is all subject to a special self-governing regime. Another aspect is the fact that the common enforcement of *avaton* has been acknowledged by the Greek State with a particular status, for historical, religious and cultural reasons’.

The practical effect of this monastic rule is that within the Athonite community there are none of the traditional divisions between gender roles. Male monks treat all tasks with equal value and undertake them all in rotation, including ‘housework’,

without female support. This allows them greater appreciation of their own frugal needs, as well as the chain of production and consumption, resulting in a more Spartan approach to the area and its natural environment. It is thus easier for the monks to rid themselves of concern for unnecessary things, leaving them with more time for their spiritual duties.

I recall the words of a monk on Athos, gazing at the sea below:

*The ‘avaton’ of Mount Athos is a monastic tradition. There are similar rules in female convents, where men, even priests, may not stay or sleep within their walls.*

*‘Avaton’ is therefore a monastic concept, not a cultural one. For only men or women to live somewhere would be bound to*

*affect the environment, but this does not relate only to World Heritage sites.*

*The monastic life is the pattern for our future life in the Kingdom of God, where gender will be erased. This is the only way to understand the spiritual significance of ‘avaton’.*

In this sense, the inviolability rule of *avaton* constitutes an inalienable part of the living spiritual tradition of Mount Athos that deserves to be respected and protected. On the Holy Mountain, the management of the natural and cultural heritage is in harmony with the spiritual traditions guiding the monastic community through the ages. For this harmony, which is difficult to achieve and to maintain, the monks endlessly strive and toil. ☸

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Archimandrite Emilianos, *Monastic Life, the House of God and the Gate of Heaven, The Authentic Seal, Catechisms and Sermons 1, Stamp of Authenticity*, p. 138.

<sup>2</sup> Inexplicably, during the lengthy procedure that preceded it, the participation and final acceptance of the institutions of Mount Athos – the Holy Community and the Double Session – were not requested, negating its self-governing status that had been valid since the Byzantine era. This lapse often resulted in tensions between the monastic community and the Ministry of Culture.

<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that all twenty monasteries on Mount Athos currently observe the cenobitic system based on ‘life in common’.

<sup>4</sup> Stelios Ramfos, 2015, *Victory as Solace*, Athens, Mousses, p. 77.

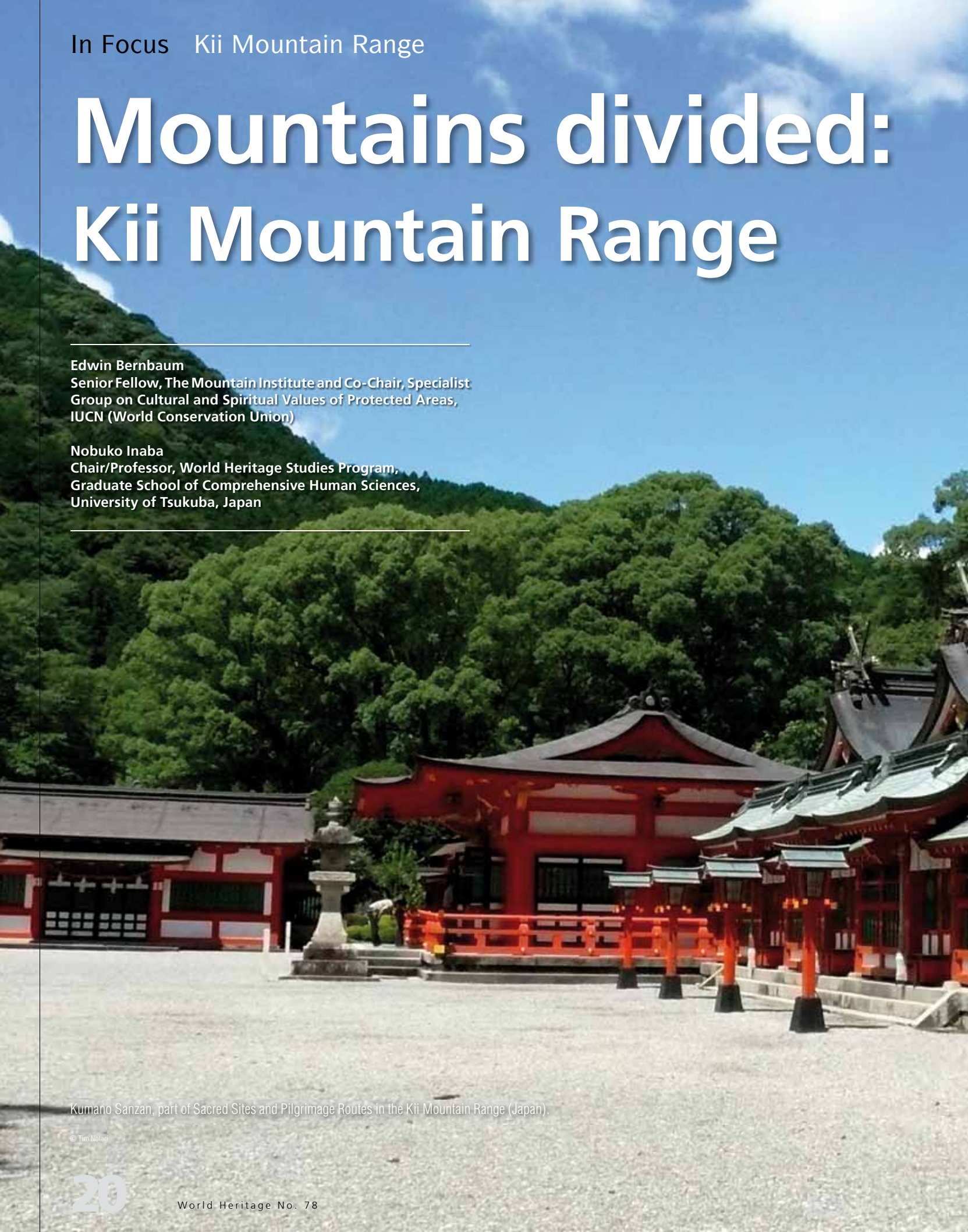
# Mountains divided: Kii Mountain Range

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Kumano Sanzan, part of Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range (Japan).





Sanjogatake, or Mount Omine, is one of the few mountains in Japan that women are still prohibited from climbing.

© Edwin Bernbaum



Shugendo became the predominant form of village religion in Japan until the Meiji Restoration in 1868.

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## Mount Omine, gender issues, and the mountain climbing religion of Shugendo

**Edwin Bernbaum**

Mount Omine, within Japan's Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range World Heritage site, continues to pose gender issues, specifically at the sacred peak of Sanjogatake, 1,719 m high. A sign at the gate marking the start of the main pilgrimage route up the sacred mountain reads:

'No Woman Admitted'

Regulation of this holly [sic] mountain Omimesan prohibits any woman from climbing farther through this gate according to the religious tradition

Omensanji Temple

Sanjogatake, or Mount Omine as it is more commonly known, is one of the few mountains in Japan that still prohibits women from climbing it – the only peak in the country included in a World Heritage site where women are banned. This has

raised contentious issues as these sites are supposed to be of Outstanding Universal Value for all of humanity, not just the male half. Most other sacred peaks that used to have this prohibition, such as Mount Fuji, have long ago dropped it.

The religious tradition cited in the sign at the start of the climb is the Japanese mountain climbing religion of Shugendo. A unique blend of Shinto and Buddhism, Shugendo draws on ancient Japanese views of mountains as sacred places of supernatural power and the hallowed abodes of *kami* (ancestral spirits). The word 'shugendo' means 'the way of mastering ascetic powers', and the practitioners of the religion are called *yamabushi* or 'those who lie down (i.e. sleep) in the mountains'. As a means of mastering these powers, the *yamabushi* climb sacred mountains seeking to purify and strengthen themselves through ascetic practices and to make contact with deities – ancient Shinto *kami* transformed into buddhas and bodhisattvas – who can infuse them with the divine power needed to attain the Buddhist goal of awakening. The word 'buddha' means

literally 'one who is awakened', while a bodhisattva is a spiritual being well along the path to complete awakening.

The arduous ascent of a peak such as Omine, with its steepness and challenging passages, becomes a metaphor for climbing through the difficult stages of spiritual development toward the spiritual heights of enlightenment. On the way the *yamabushi* engage in ritual practices such as standing under icy waterfalls, reciting mantras or sacred spells, and visualizing themselves dying and being reborn from the womb of the sacred mountain. They return to the world transformed as new persons endowed with the power to dispense blessings and help others on the way to enlightenment.

Shugendo traces its origins back to its legendary founder, En no Gyoja, a mountain wizard and ascetic said to have lived in the 7th and 8th centuries AD. According to tradition, he made the first ascent of Mount Fuji, flying magically to its summit around AD 700, about the time he established Mount Omine as a place of asceticism. In succeeding centuries En





A sign at the gate marking the start of the main pilgrimage route up the sacred mountain reads 'No Woman Admitted'.

© Edwin Bernbaum

no Gyoja's followers made Omine one of the major centres of Shugendo, and their present-day successors have maintained the strict ban on women that springs from their male-oriented ascetic practices.

During the medieval period *yamabushi* coming down to the villages with powers acquired on sacred mountains settled there and became local priests. Spreading in this way, Shugendo became the predominant form of village religion in Japan until the Meiji Restoration in 1868, when the new rulers of the country forcibly separated Shinto from Buddhism for nationalistic reasons. As Shugendo inextricably blended the two traditions together, it was banned, and the ascetic tradition only returned to life after the end of the Second World War with a new constitution granting freedom of religion. The *yamabushi* soon after re-established Omine as a pre-eminent centre for the practice of Shugendo.

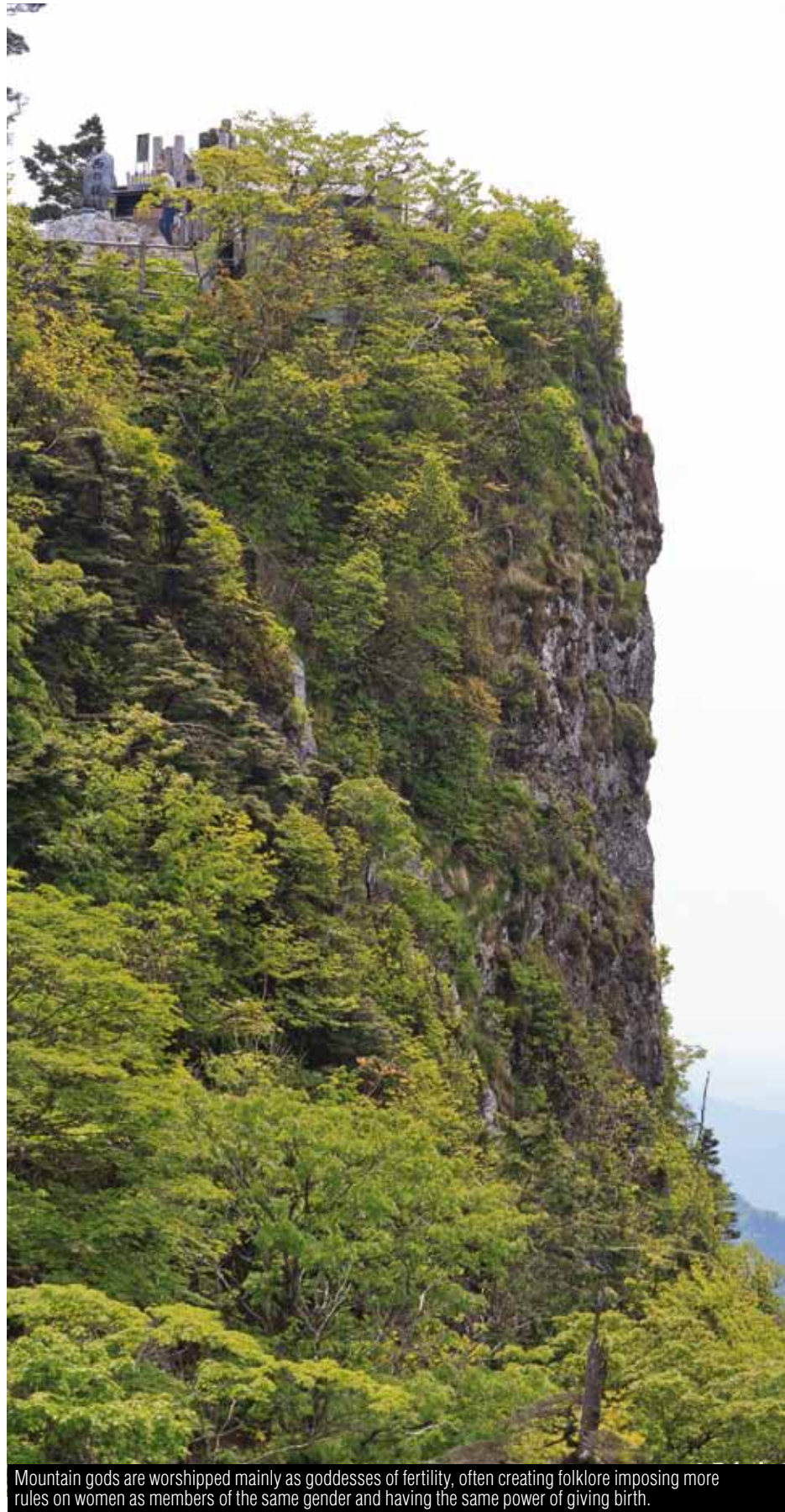
In 2005, following a UNESCO conference in Tokyo, I went with my wife to Omine. At the village of Dorogawa, near the beginning of the principal route up the sacred mountain, we had to separate – I to

climb Mount Omine, she to climb Mount Inamura, a neighbouring peak open to women. Interestingly, Inamura, which is often referred to as the 'Women's Omine', is a few metres higher and has a more pointed and elegant summit than the men's mountain. We had come from the temple of Kimpusenji at Yoshino, another major centre of Shugendo in the Kii Mountain Range, where women dressed in *yamabushi* attire had participated on an equal footing with men in a *goma* (fire ritual).

Part way up Omine, my two Japanese companions and I encountered a couple of *yamabushi* on their way down the mountain. One of them told us that over a period of nine years he had climbed Omine starting from Yoshino, a distance of some 25 km, a thousand times. Farther along the route, we came to one of the *shugyo*, ritual tests of courage and devotion for which the sacred mountain is famous. This involved climbing a small cliff with the help of chains, culminating in a scramble over a rock overhang. Higher up, not far from the summit, we reached the most spectacular and frightening of these ritual tests: the top

of a sheer 65 m high cliff where *yamabushi* are hung head down over the precipice to contemplate what they have done over their lives. One of my companions showed me how a thick white rope is put on with two loops over the shoulders to hold the practitioner safely in place as others lower him over the edge. In the old days *yamabushi* held their companions by the ankles. If a person was known to have bad karma, they would simply let him fall to his death.

Just below the summit we came to the ancient temple of Omimesan-ji, a large wooden structure with a broad pagoda roof and a dirt floor, established according to tradition by En no Gyoja himself. We entered and walked around a shrine holding an image of Zao Gongen, the principal deity of the Shugendo religion. A few steps higher took us to the summit itself, a weathered rock where the fierce-looking mountain god had appeared to En no Gyoja in a vision. From there I could look across to the pointed peak of Inamura and wonder how my wife was doing on her climb of the 'Women's Omine'.



## Gender, tradition and heritage in Japan – the case of Mount Omine

**Nobuko Inaba**

Among the properties composing the Kii Mountain Range World Heritage site, Mount Omine is the only site that is still keeping the religious tradition of prohibiting women from entering its sacred peak compound. As Edwin Bernbaum explains in his contribution to this article, Mount Omine is a well-known centre of Shugendo, a unique ascetic religious mountain practice that developed blending Buddhism and other religions with Japanese indigenous mountain worship traditions from the Heian period (9th–12th centuries).

Shugendo makes gender distinctions that place restrictions on women, although originally in our society it is also known that women were given the controlling power in in the ancient religion in the form of female shamans. In Okinawa, some rituals are still conducted solely by women, prohibiting males from entering their *utaki* sacred areas. The sacred precinct of Sefa *Utaki*, part of another World Heritage site (Gusuku Sites and Related Properties of the Kingdom of Ryukyu), is an example of gender restrictions opposite to those of Mount Omine, although this place has lost its original function.

Reflecting the surrounding mountain topography, many rituals and customs relating to mountain belief were developed in Japan. Mountain gods are worshipped mainly as goddesses of fertility, often creating folklore imposing more rules on women as members of the same gender and having the same power of giving birth. As for the more established form of restrictions on women in Shugendo, some explain that it was developed mainly intending to keep the male monks' practice areas free of the other gender in a manner similar to monasteries in other religions in the world, accelerated by the more systematically developed doctrines of Buddhism, absorbing the indigenous mountain beliefs and customs.

Entering into the modern period, in September 1872 Shugendo was banned by the government under a policy of separating Shinto from Buddhism and establishing it as the state religion. Also as part of the modernization policies, in the same period a series of proclamations

Mountain gods are worshipped mainly as goddesses of fertility, often creating folklore imposing more rules on women as members of the same gender and having the same power of giving birth.

© Edwin Bernbaum

were released to abolish many traditional customs, including those related to female discrimination, as the feudal customs were thought to slow the modernization process. These included the proclamation of March 1872 on the opening of sacred mountains that had previously barred women. Although the mutual understanding among the concerned parties was that religious rules and doctrines were outside government control, most Shugendo mountain practice centres abolished the gender prohibition tradition sooner or later, whatever their motives may have been, accepting the gender equality policy or perhaps simply expecting the number of followers to increase if women were allowed to enter. However Mount Omine is one of the last remaining centres and the only major site that keeps up the tradition.

From time to time women and their supporting groups opposing the gender discrimination tried to climb the prohibited peaks, and some of them succeeded, thus strengthening local communities' and the followers' opposition to their efforts. In parallel, the religious administration was also examining these traditions from 1872 when the government first mandated the opening of the mountains. The latest discussion took place in 2000 during the time of preparation for the 1,300th anniversary of the Shugendo founder En no Gyoja's death. However, every time the controversial subject was raised, although the religious administration was ready to consider changes, the local communities and groups of followers held their position against the opening.

Whether or not this tradition can be said to be discrimination, gender differentiations existed in all aspects and places of our traditional life reflecting the social roles of women. The fundamental policy of the



The future of the gender-restrictive tradition of Mount Omine should be dealt with primarily by its religious administration and their supporting local communities and followers.

© Edwin Bernbaum

current Japanese administration is based on the strict separation of religion and politics. Gender equality is also among the priority issues being addressed by the government. How are these principles to be dealt with in the field of cultural heritage? In other words, how should or could we deal with the continuity of tradition and political correctness? Among cultural heritage fields, intangible cultural heritage in particular is deeply connected to these issues. Increasing the attention given to traditional customs and knowledge as cultural heritage and the advantages in terms of tourism value or national identity is giving us challenges that inevitably lead us to think more deeply about this subject.

In Japanese society the differential treatment of women as the inferior

gender was strengthened in the Edo period (17th–19th centuries) as male-dominated social systems were being developed. One well-known example among heritage experts is the Gion festival float ceremony of Kyoto. The rules prohibiting women from riding on the floats were generated during this period. The ceremony is designated as an intangible folk cultural property under Japanese cultural property law. The tradition is not included in the official citation of cultural heritage value and the Japanese authorities are not in a position to intervene in discussions on the appropriateness or continuity of this tradition. The entire decision-making power is given to the administration association composed of the supporting community groups. The acceptance of women on the floats is progressing, with decisions being made by the individual float communities one by one. There are countless such examples relating to traditional customs.

In any case, the future of the gender-restrictive tradition of

Mount Omine should be dealt with primarily by its religious administration and their supporting local communities and followers. The movement to push them towards opening the mountain to women has so far not developed into any kind of substantial debate among the Japanese people.

I am a Japanese female expert who has been working in the cultural heritage field in Japan. Promoting the importance of traditional local cultural resources in the development of local governance, I have been keeping my eyes open and pursuing how best to develop our position. How do we prepare for the next time Mount Omine re-examines these issues? At that time we will probably be more critical in the process of placing heritage as the key to the continuity of tradition. ☯

# IBERIAN PLATEAU CROSS-BORDER BIOSPHERE RESERVE

*The largest Cross-Border Biosphere Reserve in Europe  
A territory to live in and visit!*

Set up in January 2010, the ZASNET EGTC – a European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation – is an example of a legal structure for territorial cooperation, within the scope of the European Union, a body with legal personality, whose purpose is to facilitate and promote cooperation between its members, reinforcing economic and social cohesion.

Its members are: Diputación de Zamora, Diputación de Salamanca and Ayuntamiento de Zamora in Spain, y Associação de Municípios da Terra Fria do Nordeste Transmontano y Associação de Municípios da Terra Quente Transmontana in Portugal.

These members have a shared history involving many years of cooperation, through their involvement in the Working Community, Bragança-Zamora (since 2000) and Territorial Community, Douro Superior-Salamanca (since 2001).

The ZASNET EGTC seeks to articulate common space and promote cross-border relations between its members in areas such as environmental conservation. It also operates in areas such as tourism, culture and sustainable development.

**UNESCO approved the 15th Cross-Border Biosphere Reserve “Iberian Plateau” on 9 June 2015. This initiative was led by the ZASNET EGTC, and this Reserve was the first to be managed by a European Grouping for Territorial Corporation.**



Fernando Maillo-Toribio| Diputación de Zamora, Francisco Javier Iglesias| Diputación de Salamanca, Berta Nunes| Associação de Municípios da Terra Quente Transmontana, Jorge Fidalgo | Associação de Municípios da Terra Fria Transmontana



## Human Activities

Primary human activities are those linked to traditional use of land, with significant production of olives, chestnuts and almonds with large extensive serial crops (in Spain) and highlighting beef, pork and sheep farming for its economic importance. Utilisation of these results in industrial activities involved in raw material transformation, the most noteworthy being products such as cheese, honey, sausages, chestnut and olive oil processed products, etc. Traditional agriculture, agroforestry production and land and cattle farming. All of these are significant due to their economic value, cattle production, forestry production (firewood and non-firewood production) and vineyards (in certain areas they are an industry in themselves, with their own appellation of origin).

The tourist industry is becoming a driver of the economy, or at least a complement to the current sources of income for the inhabitants. The service industry plays a key role in the area. The transition area is also host

## TERRITORY

	Area (ha)	%
Total surface area	1.132.606	100%
Core area	106.934	9%
Buffer zone	636.654	56%
Transition area	389.018	34%

## POPULATION

Total: 169,745 inhabitants  
Density: 14 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>

	Number of municipalities
Portugal	12
Salamanca	27
Zamora	48
<b>Total</b>	<b>87</b>

Legend: Portugal 12 population centres; Zamora Province 27 population centres and Salamanca Province 48 population centres. Administrative division in Spain is different from Portugal's, in other words, in Portugal, population centres (*Câmaras Municipais*) are subdivided into *freguesias* (town councils) and their activity is different but complementary



to the main urban area of the Biosphere Reserve, concentrating most of the secondary (manufacturing) and tertiary (services) sectors' economic activity.

#### Natural Heritage (Natura 2000 Network)

- 7 Protected Areas (5 in Portugal - Parque Natural de Montesinho, Parque Natural do Douro Internacional, Parque Natural Regional do Vale do Tua, Paisagem Protegida da Albufeira do Azibo, Área Protegida Privada Faia Brava, 2 in Spain - Parque Natural Lago de Sanabria y Alrededores, Parque Natural Arribes del Duero)
- 22 Sites of Community Importance – SCI – (8 in Portugal and 14 in Spain);
- 10 Special Protection Areas – SCA – (4 in Portugal and 6 in Spain);
- Diversity of species and habitats included in the Birds Directive and Habitats Directive annexes;
- Geoparque Terras de Cavaleiros (Portuguese section).

#### Environmental characteristics

The main landscape contrast arises from the duality between mountain and plateau areas, with very different land occupation. Plateau areas, almost entirely deforested, were occupied by rainfed agricultural systems. The altitude range varies from 100 to 2000 m.

The Spanish section stands out due to its broad diversity of landscapes, with the exception of the eastern area, forming a large mosaic of forests and heterogeneous agricultural areas. Whilst in the eastern area there are extensive areas of agrarian landscapes, primarily formed by annual cereal type crops. In spite of appearing as a large mosaic of forests and heterogeneous agricultural areas, northern and southern sectors in the area stand out due to having considerable presence of forest landscapes. The landscape in the Portuguese section, continuing towards Spanish territory, has a wealth of mountain features, and a markedly heterogeneous land occupation, which altogether comprises an extremely rich matrix of landscape features. The area is generally characterised by a layer aligned with hills and mountains, interspersed with narrow valleys, with transition areas to more or less extensive plateaus. Intrinsic to this landscape variety is a diversity of wildlife, notably the Iberian wolf (*Canis lupus signatus*), Pyrenean desman (*Galemys pyrenaicus*), Egyptian vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*), griffon vulture (*Gyps fulvus*), golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) and Eurasian eagle-owl (*Bubo bubo*) and many other species and habitats included in the Birds Directorate and Habitats Directorate annexes.

#### Cultural Heritage

It is host to significant and unique regional cultural statements, in particular ethnographic. Many of them are very similar from both sides of the border, which allows us to say that in the Iberian Plateau territory we have a “cross-border culture”.

Its architectural and archaeological heritage is rich and diverse:

- In Portugal, the “Direção Regional de Cultura do Norte” lists 2167 archaeological properties, 314 of them classified or in the process of being classified.

- In Spain, 84 properties of interest are listed, included in the Cultural Heritage of Castilla y León, 16 in Salamanca and 68 in Zamora.

In general, in the Iberian Plateau Cross-Border Biosphere Reserve, while it has diversity of ecosystems, they are complementary, which provides added ecological value.

#### Roles of the Iberian Plateau Cross-Border Biosphere Reserve

Biosphere Reserves are territories designed to promote sustainable development based on work of the local communities and scientific knowledge, in other words, Biosphere Reserves promote conservation of nature at the same time as they promote development and support education and scientific research. The concept of Biosphere Reserve is used as a mechanism to reinforce projects that promote improved quality of life for populations and ensure environmental sustainability. Recognition by UNESCO serves to highlight and reward these efforts, and to attract additional funding from different sources. In the case of the Iberian Plateau Cross-Border Biosphere Reserve, and because it involves large natural areas that transcend borders, efforts are being made to achieve joint management of natural areas while promoting long-term cooperation actions.

UNESCO Biosphere Reserves are drivers of significant development. They promote marketing of the region's products, tourism that is respectful with the environment and innovative agriculture that protects their surroundings. The Iberian Plateau Cross-Border Biosphere Reserve Action Plan is split into 5 global axes, crucial to the region and to fulfilling the three functions of Biosphere Reserves (Conservation, Development and Logistic Support):

1. Promotion of Nature Conservation and Carbon Economy;
2. Promotion of Renewable Energy Sources;
3. Promotion of Culture and Tourism Economy;
4. Promotion of professional qualification aligned with the aims of the Iberian Plateau Cross-Border Biosphere Reserve;
5. Promotion of engagement.



# Beguines and *béguinages* Self-organization and heritage

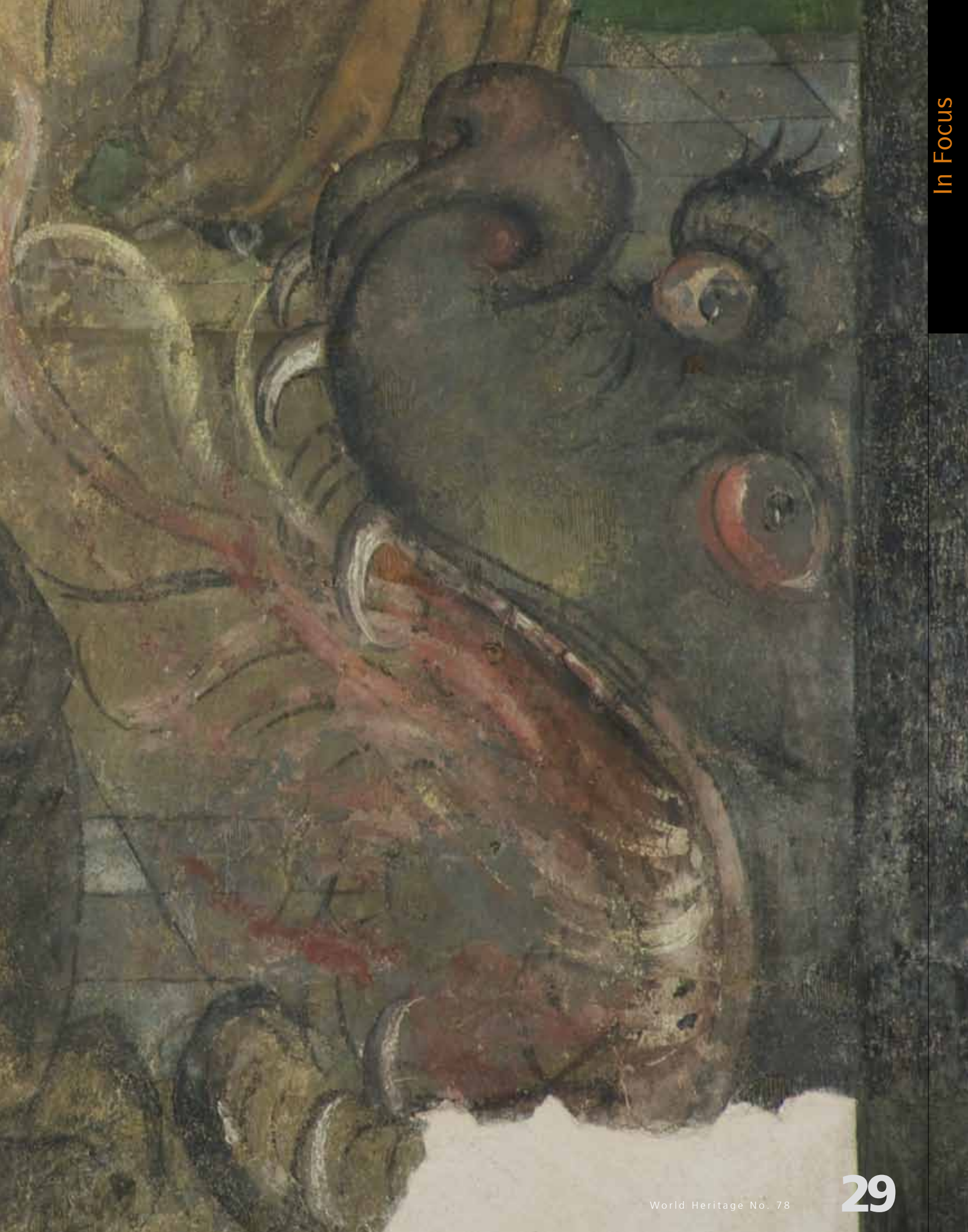
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Suzanne van Aershot - van Haeverbeeck  
Architectural historian, former 'focal point' and World Heritage  
specialist with the Flemish Government of Belgium

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Beguine 'asleep or in ecstasy' - cf. Rutebeuf, soberly dressed and ambushed here by a demon. Detail of a 15-century mural, The Wise and Foolish Virgins, in the church of the Grand Béguinage of Leuven (Belgium).

© O. Pauwels





Beguines at the Convent of Our Lady of the Flowers, sewing workshop.

© Klein Begijnhof Gent

The widespread development of towns and villages in the Netherlands during the 12th and 13th centuries led to profound changes in political, economic and social life. The local population increased sharply, thanks in particular to the inflow of part of the rural population anxious to escape feudal arrangements and join professional guilds in the urban centres. Within the Roman Catholic Church, then accused of corruption and authoritarianism, an apostolic renewal led to a revival in personal spirituality, openness to evangelization and provision of care to the needy. The mendicant orders such as the Dominicans and Franciscans, founded in the 13th century, applied these principles in an urban environment. Certain well-off and educated women saw in these trends a means of committing themselves both religiously, even in the most mystical expression of faith, and socially, while wishing to escape from the traditional ways of life that led to submission either in marriage or in a convent.

The origin and designation of the Beguines remain uncertain; the first 'grouping' of this nature was formed in northern Europe in the late 12th century in the Diocese of Liège, Belgium, where the term *béguines* is found in a text dating from 1242. These women came together in a form of specific community halfway between a lay and a purely monastic

society. Unmarried or widowed, they led a chaste and sober life, obeying religious principles without however taking vows of eternal devotion or of poverty, allowing them to leave the community at any time. Better-off women were able to maintain their own houses, while the less wealthy lived in communal houses. The beguinal movement emerged in the 13th century in the rapidly expanding European cities, without however becoming a 'religious order' with a single 'founder'. The local population was often suspicious and sometimes contemptuous of this movement, and often derided it.

### **Béguinages in modern Belgium and Flanders**

Thanks to support from territorial lords or ladies and some members of the clergy, the beguinal movement was uniquely able to survive and develop in what has become Belgium and the surrounding region. Its development was linked to local and regional history at all levels and to its social, cultural and artistic spread. In addition, the Church attempted to increase its sphere of influence as time went on, although the momentum of the 13th and 14th centuries subsequently lessened. The Protestant Reformation of the second half of the 16th century led to the religious wars of that time and to the destruction by iconoclasts of religious edifices, including the Church of the Bruges

Béguinage and the entire enclosed area of Malines, which remained outside the city walls until it was reconstructed in the centre. The northern Netherlands adopted Calvinism and declared independence at the time and the *béguinages*, except for those in Amsterdam and Breda, were dissolved. The southern Netherlands embraced the Counter-Reformation, drawn up in 1546. This celebration of the triumphant Catholic Church was echoed throughout Baroque art and strengthened the faith of believers and devotees both inside and outside the monastic life. The beguinal movement benefited from this new religious momentum, and the growing number of Beguines necessitated the extension of their enclosures and certain adaptations, until the old regime ended. The Church attempted to increase its control through annual episcopal visits and the introduction of a level of uniformity by establishing Saint Begga (622–95) as the only patron and ordering all Beguines to wear black with a white head covering.

### **Arrangement of locations**

These 'small towns within towns', built as afterthoughts in the areas enclosed in a second stage of urban development, adopted structures typical of the period. The walls of these cities of independent women ensured their protection, while their





Gloriette of a large mid 18th-century beguinal house.

© O. Pauwels

gates opened to the outside world, visitors and needy townspeople at specific times. As they developed, their extensive layout allowed them to include both developed and undeveloped areas and produced chequered 'new towns' or adopted more rural plans with a central square or *préau*, a kind of courtyard around which the various buildings were arranged. These *plans terriers* (land plans), and the hierarchy of these communities, were inspired more by the secular world than the monastic one.

The distribution and size of the buildings reveal their religious, charitable and 'organizational' purpose, as supported practically and financially by the community as a whole. From the 13th century onwards the church, the only permanent structure, occupied the most important place. The infirmary, sometimes mentioned as early as the 13th century, was located nearby. Private and communal houses or 'convents', initially of timber and later of brick and stone, were built along the streets or central courtyard.

### Communal and social self-organization

The general daily running of the community was at once hierarchical and 'democratic'. The 'mistresses' responsible for overseeing the principal aspects of life were elected by their 'sisters'. In their turn they elected

a Grande Dame, who presided over the General Council on which the mistresses and a few outsiders sat. The Grande Dame at its head ensured the correct observation of basic religious principles and the *grandes règles* (main rules) relating to everyday religious, communal and social life and particular to her *béguinage*. This strong woman represented and defended the causes of her community in the event of incidents such as problems with civil authorities and corporations, and in times of crisis she provided both authorities and residents with any help required, including financial aid where necessary.

In addition to the mistresses, the General Council also had 'outside' members. The priest or curate licensed for religious offices, sacraments and sermons, etc., established outside the enclosure, participated only as a witness of the official Church and a shepherd to that specific parish.

### Deputy leaders and the role of mistresses and others

The 'mistress of the church' was responsible for the 'material' management of the church, overseeing the collection of funds for its maintenance, upkeep and operation, carrying out offices, sacristy duties and choir rehearsals, and selecting the accompanying music.

The 'mistress of the infirmary' or hospital had the duty of collecting essential funds

and alms and managing the infirmary and its assets located within the *béguinage*, such as houses built at its expense and perhaps a farm with kitchen garden, orchards and meadows. She also managed the assets in the surrounding countryside, including tenant farmhouses, ploughed land and meadows. Assisted by nursing Beguines who worked in the hospital, she settled all issues regarding admission and care for sick, elderly or dying sisters and for poor local people, as required by secular solidarity.

The 'mistresses of the convents' managed these community houses founded by Beguines from comfortable, cultured backgrounds or by interested and wealthy benefactors. Along these lines Marie de Hamal, the wife of William II de Croÿ, Lord of Chièvres, commissioned the largest of the existing convents, De Chièvres, through testamentary provisions at the Grand Béguinage of Louvain in 1565 – it was intended for thirteen Beguines whose task was to pray for the salvation of her soul. Convents, which were less imposing and spacious, housed disadvantaged Beguines, novices and young girls not yet decided or able to support themselves. The rules particular to the convents dictated that time be shared between religious duties and work. In addition to the shared areas, such as an oratory, kitchen, refectory and



Late 17th-century monumental staircase leading to the room of the General Council of the Grand Béguinage of Leuven.

© O. Pauwels

workroom, the inhabitants also had their 'private' cells, which were often very small. Their way of life more resembled that of traditional convents, being governed by the mistress responsible for the community.

Individual Beguines had to provide for their daily needs, accommodation, furniture and so on. The better-off invested their personal assets and devoted more time to contemplation, the reading of religious and 'learned' texts, the education of children and young girls confided in the *béguinages*, and other charitable work. The less well-off made their living by working in the *béguinage* or the town, initially in textiles, which sometimes brought them into conflict with local guilds for undercutting their prices. After the drapery business declined these Beguines dedicated themselves to needlework, lacemaking, embroidery and laundry for internal and external use in the service of the priests and students of Louvain. The maintenance of communal flower and herb gardens, and the decoration during processions and festivals, were entrusted to volunteers.

### From the late 18th century to present day

During the period of French domination from 1794 to 1815, the revolutionaries abolished the religious orders and frequently confiscated and destroyed their assets. Because of their charitable function, the *béguinages* were sometimes spared to some extent, although this did not prevent the dissolution of some and the total or partial destruction of others. Converted into municipal civil hospice committees, which were the predecessors of the Assistance Publique, the *béguinages* and their assets were managed on this basis from then on. In the early 19th century a number of Beguines reintegrated the best-preserved enclosures, which gradually became populated by needy families. As time went on, however, the communities fell apart through lack of care and finance. One exception, a new neo-Gothic *béguinage*, was built in 1874–75 by the Duke of Arenberg for the 700 women driven out of Ghent, who brought most of their cultural heritage to Mont-Saint-Amand on the outskirts of town.

The Beguines, often wrongly labelled as 'bigots' or 'Bible-thumpers' in the 19th century and later, nevertheless



The *béguinages* were converted into "municipal civil hospital committees".

© O. Pauwels

maintained their traditional religious, social and 'educative' vocation, assuming their secular heritage responsibility. Often attracting 'devotees' from rural areas, the ageing communities, in addition to their religious 'duties', were more openly devoted to 'women's work', helped in some cases by modern equipment such as washing machines and irons, introduced in the 1950s by the practical and far-sighted Grande Dame of Mont-Saint-Amand. Folklore, local history and scientific research are concentrating more and more on the remaining *béguinages* in the 20th and early 21st centuries, during which period the last Beguines and Grandes Dames were disappearing from Ghent and Courtrai. The beguinal movement was highlighted by the feminists of the 1970s as an example of a 'community self-managed by independent women'. Since the end of the 20th century the 'movement' has once again gathered momentum within communities of Beguines in Germany, the United States and Canada, based on the original plan but applied to modern religious and social contexts.

Since the 1960s, the (re)discovery of Flemish *béguinages* as a way of life and good-quality housing has led to their preservation and progressive restoration and reallocation, which is still ongoing, for domestic and sociocultural purposes. During this time, they have often been taken over by non-profit-making associations or even become partially privatized. In 1998, thirteen of the most representative Flemish *béguinages* were included on the World Heritage List, because of their architectural, urban and intangible values, which together have rekindled the interest of lay managers, researchers and the general public. Publications of all kinds and local welcome and interpretation centres are trying to prevent them from becoming trivialized by highlighting the complex general context of their origins and the significance and development of the beguinal movement over seven centuries. With its distinctive material and non-material features, the movement is worthy of attention and respect in the collective memory and of the place already granted to it in the world of universal heritage. 🌀

# Tombs of Buganda Kings at Kasubi

## A testament to their female guardians

Mwanja Nkaale Rose and Kigongo Remigius  
Conservators, Kasubi Tombs World Heritage site

Tombs of Buganda Kings at Kasubi (Uganda): Buganda people visit the tombs to pay homage to the ancestors of their king, the Kabaka of Buganda.

© Sébastien Woffisset





Crowd following the Katikkiro (Prime Minister of the Government of Buganda) during a site visit.

© Sébastien Moriset

**B**uganda is the largest of the traditional kingdoms of present-day Uganda. It extends over about a quarter of the country and contains the site of the Tombs of the Buganda Kings at Kasubi, which was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2001 but was largely destroyed by fire in 2010.

The site of the Tombs of Buganda Kings at Kasubi is not only visited by tourists; it is first a living cultural space: Buganda people visit the tombs to pay homage to the ancestors of their king, the Kabaka of Buganda; there they make offerings and perform rituals to appease the spirits of the deceased kings and to ask for protection.

The inscription of this almost 30 ha site on the World Heritage List was justified by a number of considerations, including its traditional values, authenticity and credible traditional character – but also in view of its current use and function, form and architectural design, use of local (organic) materials and finally, its traditional management techniques, location and the beliefs systems surrounding it that are still related to the Buganda Kingdom.

Built in 1882 to serve as the palace of the Kabaka (king) of Buganda, Muteesa I, it stands on a hilltop overlooking a broad plain. The main building, the Muzibu-Azaala-Mpanga, is an imposing example of thatched, cone-shaped architecture with an external diameter of 31 m and an internal height of 7.5 m. The thatched cone descends all the way to the ground although a broad opening is naturally left for access, facing the compound erected around the courtyard.

Women, who are considered to be ceremonial relatives or wives of the kings, are present in the Muzibu-Azaala-Mpanga and may lead events that take place there: the four Nalinyas, for instance, are the chief guardians and ceremonial sisters to the deceased Kabakas; the Lubuga represents the king's mother. Some of their knowledge is kept secret and is passed on orally to the next generation. The main house has been partitioned with bark cloth curtains concealing the king's grave from the public and this place is known as the *kibira* (sacred forest). The people of Buganda believe that the successive kings, instead of dying, disappeared into a forest where their spirits are forever present.

### From palace to tomb

On Muteesa's death in 1884 the palace became his tomb, according to Ganda tradition. The three successive kings were also buried there, and other members of the royal family lie in a graveyard behind Muzibu-Azaala-Mpanga.

The houses surrounding the courtyard, beginning with those of the king's wives, signify the importance of the site and the royal objects kept there, which are associated with the main building.

The interior of the Muzibu-Azaala-Mpanga is a forest of columns, roofed by a domed woven grass-mat ceiling. A large bark-cloth partition divides the space in two and conceals the 'sacred forest' (*kibira*) at the rear of the structure, where the graves of the four deceased kings are kept out of sight. The kings' insignias are however displayed in front of the 'forest'. Since, in Ganda tradition, kings do not die but travel into the 'forest', they then advise successive generations from there. The custodians and intermediaries, by tradition the kings' 'wives', play a very important role in everyday and occasional rituals, serving the departed kings and acting as their voices..



Woman at Kasubi preparing matoke, Uganda's staple food made of steamed plantain bananas.

© Sébastien Moriset

## The inscription of this almost 30 ha site on the World Heritage List was justified by a number of considerations, including its traditional values, authenticity and credible traditional character.

### Royal guards and drummers

The gatehouse entrance to the compound, which housed the royal guards (Abambowa), is known as the Bujjubukula. Nearby is the small Ndogo Obukaba building where the royal drums are kept.

Beyond the guards' and drummers' enclosures is the main courtyard, where visitors find themselves facing the tomb. Nine women's houses surround the courtyard to the left and right of the Muzibu-Azaala-Mpanga, the location and names of which refer specifically to functions relating to the tombs and the palace ensemble.

The houses on the left are those of the wives (and successors who have taken on the role of wives) of King Muteesa II and Mwanga II and they harbour the so-called 'twin objects', old and new items used to serve the kings in the 'forest'. Those to the right shelter the wives (and successors who

have also taken on the role of wives) and artefacts belonging to Muteesa I and Daudi Chwa II and their close relatives.

### Specific roles of women

The women of Kasubi play important roles at the tombs. They ensure the maintenance of traditional skills and practices that keep the tombs a living site. This acknowledged importance, however, does not appear to discourage the idea that if any woman were allowed inside the building while thatching is in progress the roof will always leak!

Women perform a wide range of duties, continually refurbishing the tombs complex. This includes making mats and crafting royal objects such as gourds and 'twin objects' for the kings. Others have the duty of looking after the royal objects kept in the respective houses.

Wives also perform spiritual rituals and carry out traditional nursing procedures. In addition they register new 'twin objects', praying for life and luck before the tombs of the kings. Only they are allowed to enter and clean the 'forest' that lies behind the bark-cloth partition in the Muzibu-Azaala-Mpanga.

Raised platforms in front of this partition correspond to the position of each king's tomb behind it. A basket to receive supplications for each king is placed in front of his insignia. The wives take charge of requests, continually look after the tombs, maintain the floor of the great hut and replace old mats with new ones. They also weave mats and make sure that visitors do not infringe the rules of the site.

### Royal visits

The kings' wives and sisters are responsible for traditional ceremonies within the tomb, including the veneration of the 'twin objects' and welcoming the current king and other visitors for traditional consultations. On such occasions, which happen on a daily basis, the women on duty prepare the mats, then clean and serve coffee



One of the royal family members preparing mats for the site.

© Sébastien Moriset

beans as a welcoming gesture. With the restoration of the Muzibu-Azaala-Mpanga in progress, the women have the special task of preparing for the ceremonies for the monthly visit to the tombs by the Katikkiro (first advisor to the king), who has launched a fundraising drive for the restoration of the Muzibu-Azaala-Mpanga.

Whenever the current king visits the tombs, the wives take him through with traditional songs praising the deceased monarchs, dancing with joy before the king and offering presents such as coffee beans and local beer brewed by the Musenero (chief brewer). These intangible cultural heritage ceremonies performed by the

women are associated with the protection of the king, members of the royal family and the nation.

### Management

The site is traditionally managed under the custodianship of the Nalinya, the title that the king's sister (Lubuga) takes when the king 'retreats into the forest'. Despite the fact that the first three wives of the kings (Kaddulubale, Nassaza and Kabejja) were much respected by the other women, the Nalinya is the spiritual guardian supervising the various groups of women living at the site. The three wives are responsible for the coordination of farming activities on the

land located behind the tombs complex and for reporting on various aspects of the site to the Nalinya. The farmland is still managed by the women or wives in traditional land tenure practices and food is cultivated for home consumption. The growth of the city of Kampala has recently encroached on the tombs area and become a conservation issue.

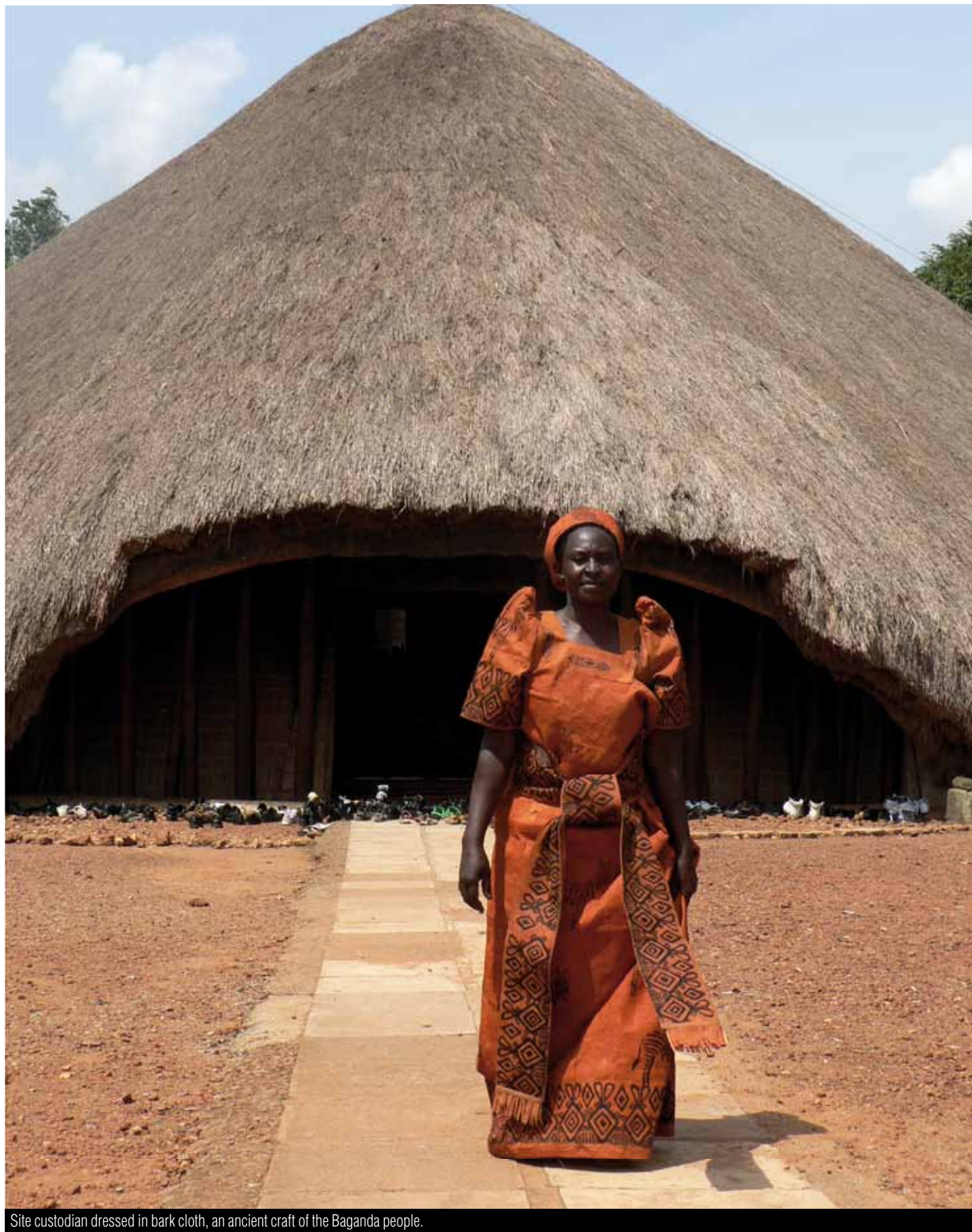
### Spiritual duties

Many people visit the tombs to pray as well as to consult the kings about their own problems and those of the community in general. The guardian women are tasked with informing the departed kings of problems and ailments among the population. It is generally believed that these women are endowed with healing powers, especially when their requests are conveyed to the deceased kings. They are deemed to be able to step into the spirit world to appeal for help. Under such circumstances the physical and spiritual worlds appear to meld.

The problems the women are required to address range from chronic child ailments to infertility and such other matters with which they are familiar. They also deal with children's medical needs. This traditional medicine requires the cultivation on-site of medicinal plants, such as local herbs helpful to women in labour.

The women are devoted to the site and to the transmission of knowledge and the upkeep of norms and traditions. In Ganda tradition, no shrine of a deceased king was ever allowed to disappear and the clans from which the kings' wives are chosen continue to have that honour to the present day – a continuity that has remained unbroken for over a hundred years. However, the privileges and good treatment that the kings' wives were receiving before have disappeared. Serving as a king's wife today at Kasubi has become very difficult, because conservation efforts since the 1970s have always focused more on maintaining the outstanding architecture than on preserving the social structures that keep the site alive. But the women keep on coming to the site to serve their turn and respect Buganda tradition. The long existence of the Kasubi Tombs site with its spiritual observances is definitely due to the important roles attributed to the women who live there. ☺

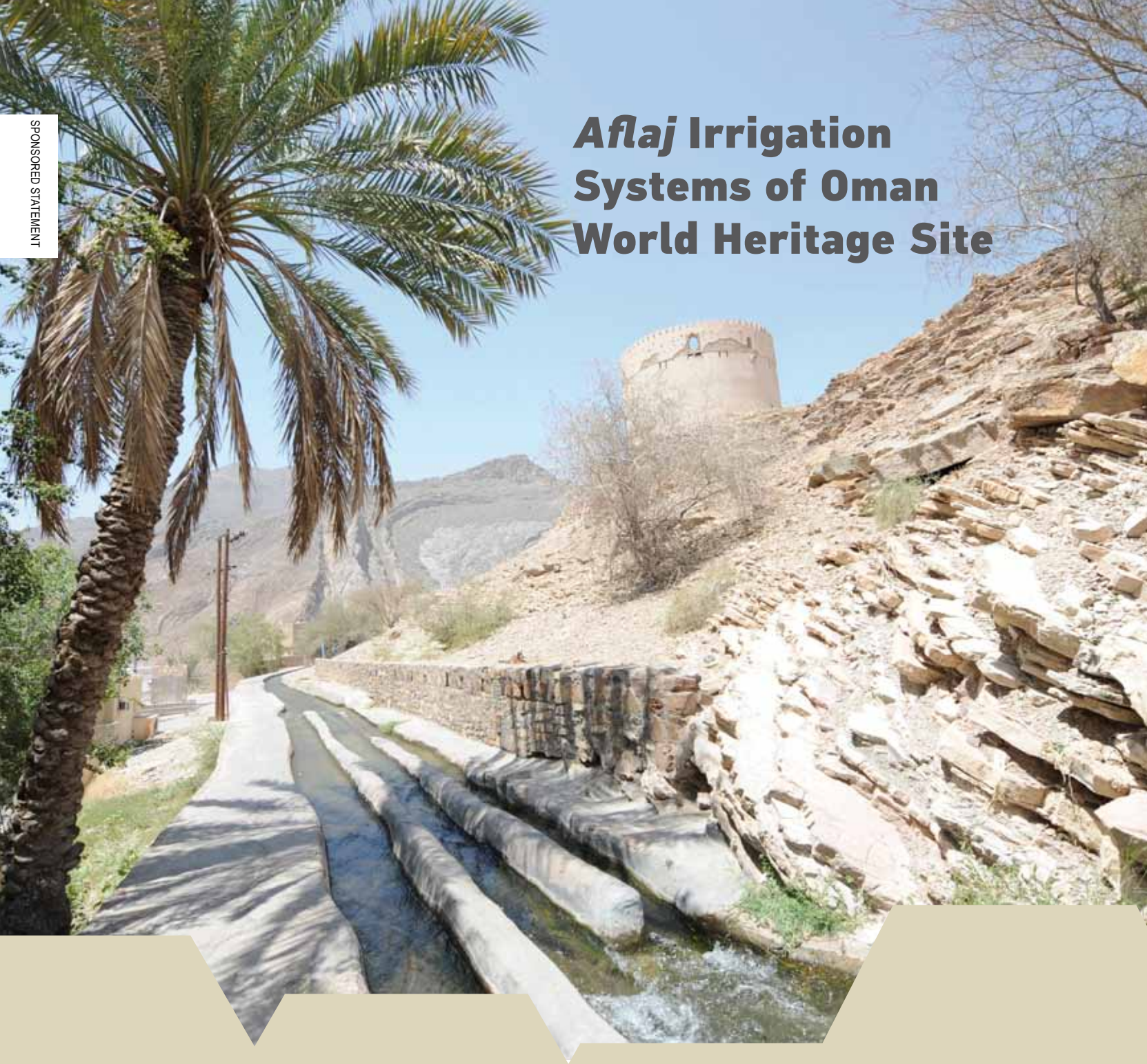




Site custodian dressed in bark cloth, an ancient craft of the Baganda people.

© Sébastien Moriset

# Aflaj Irrigation Systems of Oman World Heritage Site



**T**he *aflaj* irrigation system is an integral part of the life of Omani society, as it represents one of the most important sources of water, which has and continues to sustain life in various regions and governorates of Oman. It is also considered an important cultural legacy of Omani civilization that clearly reflects the capacity of the Omani people to adapt to the dry desert environment in order to achieve stability, build a civilization and enrich Omani heritage in all aspects.

The *Aflaj* Irrigation System of Oman was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2006, on the basis of Criterion (V)

of the *Operational Guidelines* as ‘an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change’. The *aflaj* World Heritage site is a serial site. There are five individual falaj that together comprise the World Heritage Site – falaj Al Jeela, falaj Muyasser, falaj Daris, falaj Malki and falaj Khatmein.

The site is an outstanding example of what ICOMOS has described as ‘distinct and living cultural landscapes’ – millennia-old integrated landscapes that evolved around



the sophisticated irrigation systems required to enable permanent settlement in a very arid, inhospitable region. The *aflaj* World Heritage site is also very much a living, working landscape, whose core components still function to this day.

The *aflaj* is more than a hydrological system. At the *aflaj* World Heritage site, the irrigation system is just one component of an interrelated and interdependent landscape that developed as a result of water availability.

These cultural landscapes include settlement areas and agricultural areas which represent the traditional land uses that developed with the water systems, and also the traditional management structures and practices that evolved to manage the water supply. These water systems were both vital to the existence of the communities they supplied, and also highly dependent on those communities for ongoing maintenance and investment.



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# Breaking new ground Virunga's female rangers

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Fleur Nieddu  
Virunga National Park

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Ranger Xaverine at Virunga National Park (Democratic Republic of the Congo).

© Adam Kieler





Ranger Francine.

© Adam Kiefer

**B**efore becoming a ranger, I was wondering if it was possible for a small girl like me to achieve in a job where some men had already failed. And today, I know that it is possible. I'm doing a job that is believed to be done only by men, like going on patrols and escorting people. From an economic point of view, now, if a man wants to do a project, I think I can do it as well because I receive the same salary. This makes me feel equal to a man, a man to whom God has given the possibility to do everything, and today thanks to my work, I can do the same. Ranger Solange Kahumbu Malilisa, age 24, Virunga National Park

Virunga National Park in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is a UNESCO World Heritage site, one of the most biodiverse places on Earth and home to a quarter of the world's last remaining mountain gorillas. The site was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1979, among the first inscriptions, and placed on the List of World Heritage in Danger in 1994. Africa's oldest national park, this 790,000 ha stretch of land is steeped in history and like so many World Heritage sites today, faces numerous extractive pressures – most recently from the oil and gas industry. Despite these pressures, Virunga National Park has become a cornerstone for real, sustainable development and

a more prosperous future for the 4 million people who live within a day's walking distance of its borders, women included.

Francine Bwizabule Muhimuzi is 26 years old and was born in the town of Bukavu, south of the national park. Today, she serves as a guardian of Virunga. Like her male counterparts, she works for one of the best examples of good governance in eastern Congo. As a Congolese Ranger and a government official, she stands on the frontline of conservation – in fact she leads her own battalion of male and female rangers – forging a new path for the Congolese women of her nation and shattering stereotypes as she goes.

*My desire to be a ranger overcomes anything, even the fear of what might happen to me whilst protecting Virunga National Park. Working in conservation means I can afford to take care of myself and my family. I have a responsibility to my colleagues to be the best that I can be. Conservation has given me a new purpose in life and I feel strong.* Ranger Francine Bwizabule Muhimuzi, age 26, Virunga National Park

Breaking away from the paralysis of a civil war and a time where women have typically only made headlines as the victims of human rights violations, the women of Virunga National Park have taken centre stage for an altogether more empowering story. From female



**Virunga National Park in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is a UNESCO World Heritage site, one of the most biodiverse places on Earth and home to a quarter of the world's last remaining mountain gorillas.**

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Virunga National Park mountain gorillas.

© Brent Stirton



Tchegeza Island Camp, Lake Kivu, Virunga National Park.

© Axelle Repetti

rangers such as Francine and Solange who are the first of their kind in the world, to the female workforce rebuilding eastern Congo's infrastructure, Virunga National Park is placing women at the core of almost every part of its organization.

**From female rangers to the female workforce rebuilding eastern Congo's infrastructure, Virunga National Park is placing women at the core of almost every part of its organization.**

'Ensuring that equal opportunities are available to men and to women of eastern Congo is crucial on a social level, but also in terms of implementing our development goals, ranging from climate change to peace and conflict solutions. There's no other way for us to succeed.' Director of Virunga National Park, Emmanuel De Merode, explains: 'By placing women at the heart of Virunga National Park's infrastructure, we're not only yielding better results as a World Heritage site but also as a development project that could bring peace and prosperity to North Kivu.'

A public-private partnership called the Virunga Alliance is largely responsible for the steady evolution of women's rights in the province of North Kivu. Born of a Congolese commitment to protect Virunga National Park, which alongside other World Heritage properties takes up less than 1 per cent of the Earth's surface, the Virunga

walking distance of the park's borders.

September 2014 saw the completion of the national park's first Virunga Alliance project, a hydro-electric plant in the small conflict-affected town of Mutwanga. Located in the previously impoverished region of Beni, the plant now generates 0.4 MW of power, enlivening trade and creating sustainable job opportunities that are transforming the community. From the outset, women have worked with the core team of engineers and labourers behind its completion – a milestone in the park's history and in the regeneration of eastern Congo.

'Empowering women through the regeneration of Virunga National Park was one of our ultimate goals when outlining the parameters of the Virunga Alliance,' says committed private investor Howard G. Buffett, of the Howard G. Buffett Foundation. 'It's an incredible thing to meet with the workforce and see that the frontline of conservation is representative of an entire community.'

Alliance aims to foster peace and prosperity through the responsible economic development of natural resources. Again, benefiting 4 million people who live within a day's



With an additional three hydroelectric plants currently under way, the park's conservation initiatives ensure that Congolese women are represented in what was previously the reserve of men; stepping up to take jobs as electricians, masons, painters, warehouse operators and kitchen chefs. At the age of 31, Masika Kisuba Vanis from Ruthsuru works as a technician for Matebe, Virunga National Park's second hydroelectric power plant that is set to generate 13.6 MW of clean electricity at completion.

*This job allows me to provide for myself and for the needs of my family. It also allows me to explore my technical and intellectual capacities. I particularly appreciate working in such a stimulating environment. The people around me are often astonished when I tell them I work as a technician on the electrical grid. They ask me if I'm not afraid of the electricity, and I'm used to living and working surrounded*



Nyiragongo Volcano.

© LCadd

*by men. However, people as well as my colleagues often congratulate and encourage me to continue my work as a female technician.* Masika Kisuba Vanis, age 31, Virunga National Park

As the famous words of Kofi Annan ring true: 'There is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women', there is a real sense that Virunga National Park is trailblazing and setting an example for the global community to follow. It continues to meet the highest standards in terms of what is possible; making use of its

rich natural resources and driving real sustainable socio-economic development that benefits men and women, all the while, staying true to the art of conservation through the preservation of World Heritage for generations to come.

Learn more about the Virunga Alliance and how you can support Virunga National Park at [virunga.org/virunga-alliance](http://virunga.org/virunga-alliance). 

## Baptism Site, Jordan

The Baptism Site on the Eastern shore of the River Jordan has been known throughout history by many names like Bethabara and Bethany Beyond the Jordan and this past year it added another name to its legacy; UNESCO World Heritage Site. The site, acknowledged both in the Bible and from Byzantine and Medieval texts, has been identified to extend from St. Elijah's Hill (Tall Mar Elias) to the area surrounding the John the Baptist Church; it is where John had been living and carrying out his baptisms, where Jesus was baptized by John, and where He launched his public ministry. The area itself is blessed with religious relics from different civilizations as the Baptism Site formed part of the early Christian pilgrimage route between Jerusalem, The Jordan River and Mount Nebo.

  
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# 30 YEARS

## OLD QUÉBEC UNESCO

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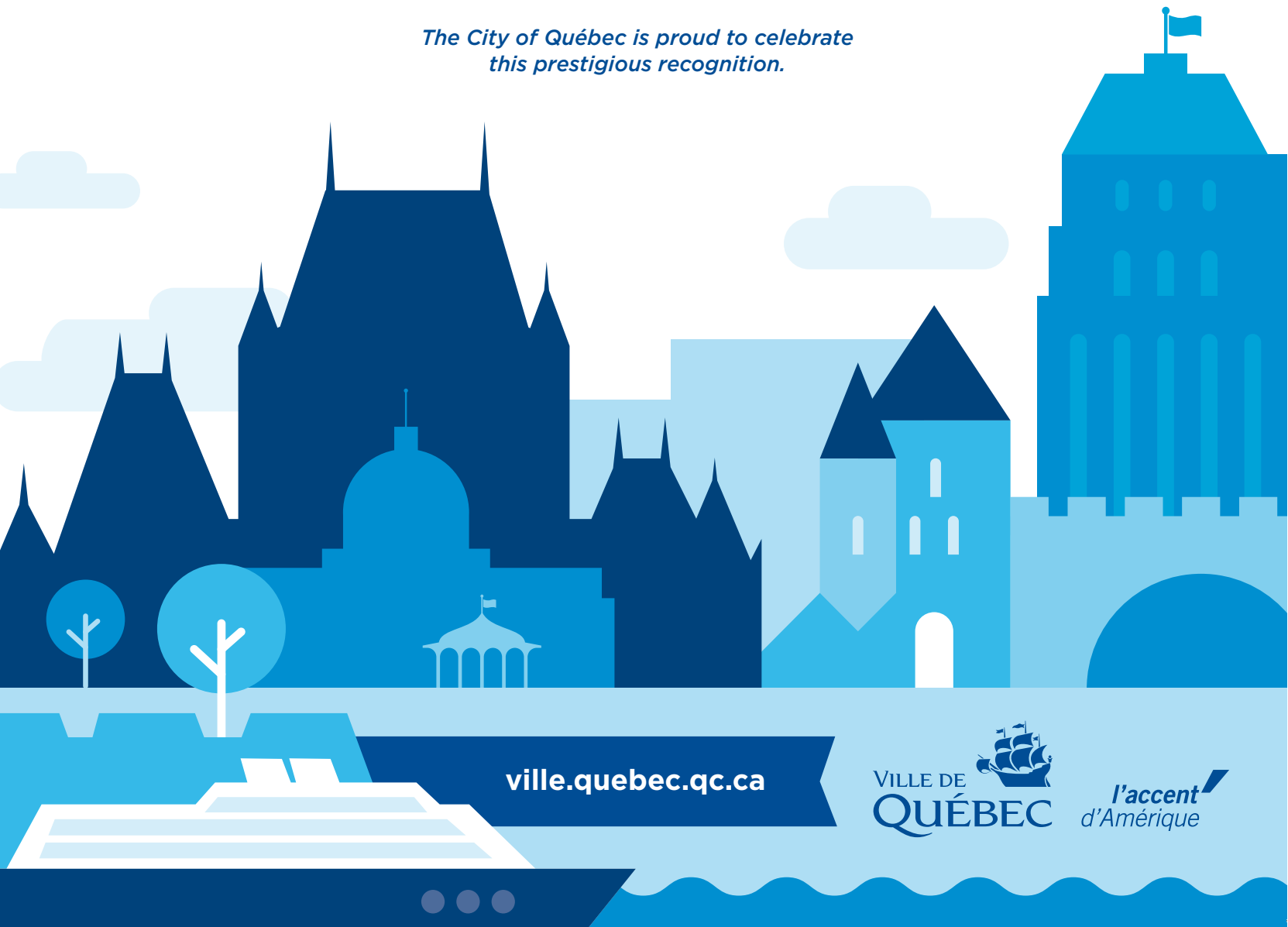
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# Forum

Intangible cultural heritage (ICH)-related knowledge, skills and know-how frequently rely on informal gender-based modes of transmission, and this raises important questions as to the potential impacts of safeguarding measures on the bearers and the ICH itself. Falconry, for example, inscribed in 2012 as a multinational element, is almost exclusively transmitted through a male master/pupil apprenticeship.

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An 'Arab Camp' at the Festival of Falconry in Berkshire (United Kingdom).

© Angus Kirk

## Interview with Farida Shaheed, Director of Shirkat Gah – Women’s Resource Centre

Farida Shaheed (Pakistan), Director of Shirkat Gah – Women’s Resource Centre, was the first UN Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights, serving from 2009 to 2015. For over 25 years, she has contributed to fostering policies and projects designed in culturally sensitive ways to support the rights of marginalized sectors, including women, peasants, religious and ethnic minorities, in Pakistan and beyond.



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### World Heritage:

**Have you encountered any difficulties with international legal instruments on heritage conservation (such as the World Heritage Convention), in integrating gender equality?**

**Farida Shaheed (FS):** Let me first clarify that the mandate on cultural rights is not so much about the conservation of cultural heritage per se, but ensuring the conditions necessary for everyone to continually create cultural meanings and expressions on a basis of equality and without discrimination. That said, cultural heritage forms a crucial part of people’s collective identity and world visions which lie at the core of cultural rights. Given that women often have differing perspectives on cultural heritage, be it tangible or intangible, it is unfortunate that international legal instruments on heritage conservation make no explicit mention of gender or of the involvement of women. This absence is equally evident in the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (2015) and in the *Operational Directives for the Implementation of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* (2014).

I therefore greatly appreciate the work that UNESCO has done to highlight the issue of gender equality, particularly in its 2014 report on *Gender Equality: Heritage and Creativity*, expanding on the absence of women with regard to definitions of heritage sites and decisions concerning them. It is essential to ensure that distinctions do not lead to indirect or structural discrimination against women and girls. Hence, the statement in Article 13(d)(ii) of the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*, according to which access to cultural heritage should be ensured ‘while respecting customary practices governing access to specific aspects of such heritage’, cannot be interpreted as permitting gender-based discrimination.

**WH: How would you wish to see gender equality expressed in heritage conservation projects on the ground?**

**FS:** Cultural rights, as I have stressed in my reports for the Human Rights Council, must be understood as relating to whoever in the community holds the power to define its collective identity. It also relates to whoever the state authorities acknowledge, and therefore engage with, as speaking on behalf of a particular community. The reality of intra-community diversity makes it imperative to ensure that all voices within a community, including those that represent

the interests, desires and perspectives of specific groups, are heard without discrimination, in particular women and girls who constitute half the population.

With regard to heritage conservation projects, a gender equality perspective demands effective measures to ensure that women are equal partners in the identification, interpretation and safeguarding/stewardship of all cultural heritages. Consultative processes must include differently situated women in the community as women, too, are not a monolith and have diverse viewpoints. Steps must be taken to validate women as equal interpreters of cultural heritage. A separate related challenge is overcoming the many practices in every cultural community that are harmful to girls and women. In this respect, measures are required to support and enhance the cultural legitimacy and symbolic validation of women’s perspectives and interpretations that enable practices harmful to women to be surmounted. These may include, for example, promoting knowledge about international human rights standards, revising historical narratives to reflect cultural diversity and highlight women’s contributions, and documenting the actual diversity of practices and making these known. It is particularly important to support women’s transformative initiatives: to listen to local women and build on the tools and terminology they use, including elements to be retrieved from cultural heritage that may have fallen into disuse.

**WH: How do you see restricted access to sites for either men or women? There are examples of both on the World Heritage List. In your view, is this compatible with human rights?**

**FS:** As mentioned in *Gender Equality: Heritage and Creativity*, nearly all heritage sites (such as those on the World Heritage List) have gendered dimensions of access, including for example segregated entrances to buildings, different places assigned to men and women in religious monuments or sacred natural spaces. Such attributions are based on societal and other arrangements that form, produce and replicate gendered structures. In many instances, further research is needed to understand the origin and meaning of the different roles and spaces attributed to men and women. Regardless of origin, however, an important issue to be considered today is the consequences that such arrangements have in terms of supporting stereotypes and discrimination.

Gender-specific restrictions and practices do not stop at cultural heritage sites. These are found in cultural or religious practices,

customs and traditions that prohibit women from engaging in interpreting and applying particular texts, rituals or customs. Likewise, the practice of ancestral medical techniques, sometimes associated with the performance of ritual ceremonies, dancing and the playing of music, may be reserved for men, possibly leading to the exclusion of women from medical and pharmaceutical knowledge.

As suggested in my report on women’s cultural rights on a basis of equality with men, such practices need revisiting in the light of contemporary realities and international human rights standards. For this, internal discourses are needed within communities using human rights standards as a reference point.

**WH: How would you like to help to remind states of their obligations to mainstream gender equality and human rights in cultural heritage conservation (which include traditional practices at sites)?**

**FS:** While I am no longer the UN Special Rapporteur, during my mandate I have stressed that preserving the existence and cohesion of a specific cultural community, national or subnational, must not be achieved to the detriment of one group within the community, for example, women. Women and girls must not be obliged to choose between community belonging and citizenship, or between any of their other identities. As the primary guarantors of rights, states have the predominant responsibility for ensuring that women as well as men recognize women’s right to be rights

claimants, for assisting women and girls to claim and exercise their rights and in supporting women to reshape the various communities they desire to be a part of. This includes making concerted efforts to ensure their voices are heard and that they are supported to move from the peripheries to the centre of decision-making on all matters relating to culture, including cultural heritage.

As Special Rapporteur, I recommended in a 2012 report on cultural rights for the UN General Assembly that states should review the following issues so as to assess the level of implementation, or non-implementation, of the cultural rights of women in their territories on a basis of equality. ‘Restrictions on women wishing to undertake any form of art and self-expression, to enter cultural heritage sites or premises, to participate in cultural events or ceremonies and to engage in interpreting and applying particular texts, rituals or customs. This includes identifying cultural and religious practices, customs and traditions that prohibit such engagement by women; ... Measures adopted to ensure that women participate, on an equal basis with men, in identifying and selecting what constitutes cultural heritage, in assigning meaning to such heritage and in the decisions relating to what should be transmitted to future generations’ ...

**WH: Is there anything else you would like to add?**

**FS:** Only that culture is a constantly evolving process, and that it is essential that this dynamic aspect also be applied to the interpretation of cultural heritage. 🌱



Brahminy Kites



Great Hornbill

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# Creating Journeys for the imagination



Castles of Augustusburg and Falkenlust at Brühl

# Gender equality in heritage management, conservation and capacity-building

Selma Kassem

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In modern society, gender equality is being discussed as an important part of the overall topic of human development. UNESCO took the initiative to include gender equality in its Priority Action Plan 2014–2021 as one of its two main global goals. As one of the flagship programmes of UNESCO, the World Heritage Convention was set up to safeguard the cultural and natural heritage of Outstanding Universal Value. But, within the current discussions on development, it is important that this protection takes place within a framework that assures that people of both genders have appropriate access to their heritage and benefit from its presence. Therefore, it is crucial to investigate potential inclusive gender-balanced approaches that offer mutual benefits to the site itself and to its entire community. The inclusion of as yet excluded community members should be seen as an opportunity to enhance the preservation of World Heritage properties, rather than a burden.

At the 20th General Assembly of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention in November 2015, a new policy on the integration of a sustainable development perspective into the processes of the World Heritage Convention was adopted. This policy was developed by the World Heritage Centre, in close cooperation with the Advisory Bodies and other heritage professionals, through workshops held in Germany and Viet Nam. The policy is important in that it places the protection of World Heritage properties within the larger context of human rights, equality and sustainability. Within this framework, the notion of gender equality falls within the second core dimension of Inclusive Social Development, and therefore takes into account the well-being and continuity of sites and their stakeholders.

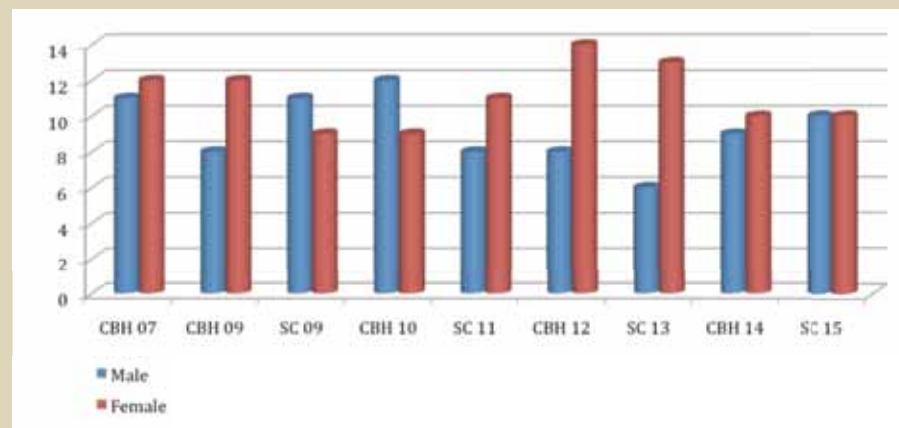
Acknowledging the importance of giving heritage a function in the life of the community, the new policy states: ‘full inclusion, respect and equity of all stakeholders, including local and concerned communities and indigenous peoples, together with a commitment to gender equality, are a fundamental premise for inclusive social development’.

As an Advisory Body to the World Heritage Committee, ICCROM was a member of the working group that developed the new policy, and fully supports its aims and principles, including the importance of gender balance in achieving sustainability at heritage properties. In its role as the lead advisor for capacity-building issues, ICCROM has been very active in promoting inclusive approaches to management of World Heritage properties. For example, in the resource manual *Managing Cultural World Heritage*, ICCROM emphasizes the importance of a participatory approach that includes stakeholders of both genders, especially women, in the complete management cycle of a property, ‘in order to make this particular group visible and

to harness their potential contributions, skills and needs while overcoming their difficulties’. The counterpart resource manual, *Managing Natural World Heritage*, authored by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), sees the empowerment of women, among others, as part of crucial poverty alleviation strategies for World Heritage properties.

Following its mandate, ICCROM offers numerous capacity-building courses that seek to develop the skills and knowledge of heritage professionals in conservation and management of heritage sites. When choosing course participants, ICCROM always aims to create a balance between gender, geographical and professional backgrounds. Looking back at the attendance of the two regular courses on Conservation of Built Heritage and on Stone Conservation over the last eight years, it can clearly be seen that ICCROM has consistently provided significant opportunities for female mid-career professionals to improve their conservation skills and their international network of conservation contacts.

**Courses on Conservation of Built Heritage (CBH) and Stone Conservation (SC)**







Women walk on the roof of the Great Mosque of Djenné after praying, Old Towns of Djenné World Heritage site (Mali).

© UN Photo/Marco Dormino

The number of participants is however not the only way in which ICCROM approaches gender issues. Course content is also developed to promote gender equality and full participation of all members of relevant communities. A recent example is the course on People-Centred Approaches: Engaging Communities in the Conservation of Nature and Culture, which took place from 5 to 16 October 2015 in Rome and the Bay of Naples in cooperation with the World Heritage Centre, IUCN and the Norwegian Ministry of Climate and Environment. The participants, sixteen female and four male heritage professionals from nineteen countries, covered subjects relating to concepts and methodologies for involving communities in the conservation of heritage, and clearly touched on the subject of gender equality.

Another ICCROM programme that clearly confronted gender issues was AFRICA

2009, implemented between 1997 and 2009. In its earliest phases, the programme found that, as a result of various cultural and historical factors, there had been a gender imbalance both at the professional and management levels of Africa heritage institutions. Empowerment of women, therefore, became one of the key goals of the project. Women were not only identified as part of the target audience and programme beneficiaries, but gender balance as a whole was identified as one of its main objectives.

Over its twelve years of implementation, the programme ensured that between 40 and 50 per cent of the 375 participants trained were women. In addition, women held leadership roles in the programme, as part of the staff as well as participating within the all-important Steering Committee made up of directors of cultural heritage from the region. AFRICA 2009 also

sought to highlight heritage conservation issues important to women and ensure that management plans developed as part of its courses and site projects were created with the full participation of female community members. Key issues such as gender equality with respect to social and economic benefits arising from World Heritage status were also discussed, and special attention was paid to those categories of heritage traditionally managed by women in the region.

While strides are being made towards gender equality within the World Heritage context, much more work still needs to be done. The recently approved policy on sustainable development is an important step, but ICCROM and partners must ensure that these issues retain a high visibility in training courses and other capacity-building activities of all types.

# Gender and the 2003 Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention

Janet Blake

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Gender is commonly expressed, enacted, performed and even constituted in and through intangible cultural heritage (ICH) and is manifested in a variety of forms that go far beyond a simple, dualistic male/female dichotomy. Despite this, the gender dynamics of safeguarding ICH have, until recently, received little attention. With the publication of *Gender Equality, Heritage and Creativity* in 2014, UNESCO took a major step in officially recognizing this important aspect of the significance and character of heritage as well as of the impacts of protective measures. When thinking about how gender dynamics affect ICH and its safeguarding, we can understand heritage as a process through which our identities, including gender identities, and social and cultural meaning are mediated and worked out.

Given that gender diversity has its roots in culture, it represents an important form of cultural diversity, a value formally endorsed in UNESCO's 2001 Declaration on Cultural Diversity. The many and various gender dynamics of ICH can be found, for example, in Japanese Kabuki theatre in which a subversive gender role is presented in the form of male actors playing female characters, expressing a gender ambiguity and transformation that challenges binary female/male gender systems. Similarly, the Hát chầu vãn shamanistic ceremony from Viet Nam is one in which traversing gender is integral, with female mediums possessed by male spirits and taking on 'masculine' gender characteristics (dress, weapons, behaviours, etc.) and vice versa. The Dance of the Chinelos in Mexico includes a burlesque 'Widow's Parade' of men dressed as women, reflecting the fact that the role of homosexuals in Meso-American and pre-Columbian societies was accepted.

## Clearly defined roles

At the same time, examples of gendered ICH practice along all-male and all-female lines abound, as in the Song and dance of



Ganggangsullae is a seasonal harvest and fertility ritual popular in the Republic of Korea.

© National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage

the Acoli in Uganda where men and women have clearly defined roles. Interestingly, women have used this performance as a public space in which to promote issues affecting them as a gender category. The Ganggangsullae women's dance in the Republic of Korea, inscribed on the Representative List in 2009, binds women together, offers them a channel for self-expression and serves as a means for new brides to integrate into the community. The Makishi masquerade in Zambia is performed at the end of an initiation rite for 8- to 12-year-old boys that takes place within the village community and marks their re-entry to society as adult men. Some other ICH elements demonstrate clear gender-based divisions of labour, such as the traditional manufacturing of children's wooden toys in Croatia, which are hand-made by men but mostly painted by women, as inscribed on the Representative List in 2009.

No single and universally applicable understanding of gender exists and some societies recognize a number of different genders, including transgender and double-spirited people. Hence, the uncritical imposition of inappropriate views of gender roles can damage gender systems which may be crucial to the transmission and safeguarding of ICH

elements. As these systems are embedded within other social power relations, a gender-based approach to safeguarding ICH has to contextualize human activities within wider social relationships. Moreover, since community participation is central to the 2003 Convention, gender analyses of ICH should give prominence to the cultural community's own understanding of gender balances while bearing in mind the diversity of viewpoints within the community.

## Safeguarding traditions

However, taking such a gender-responsive approach to ICH safeguarding can prove a challenge. As pointed out in a 2004 issue of *MUSEUM International*, in the context of nominations to the international lists of the 2003 Convention, the impression may be given that the Convention tends to reduce ICH to 'a list of largely expressive traditions, atomistically recognized and conceived', and the safeguarding actions proposed may miss a larger, holistic aspect of culture of which its gender dynamics form a part. This holistic character – 'the intricate and complex web of meaningful social actions undertaken by individuals, groups, and institutions', is the very characteristic that makes culture intangible. This is not surprising in that negotiating an

international treaty does not easily allow for a sufficiently nuanced approach that can take into account complex gender dynamics. However, given the dangers of dealing with ICH in a 'gender-blind' fashion and unintentionally reproducing or reinforcing gender-based discrimination and exclusion, it is essential to develop safeguarding strategies that take account of gender as far as possible.

With regard to specific safeguarding actions, a gender bias may well be built into the process of identifying ICH, resulting in the heritage of gender-based groups being ignored. Those active in ICH research and documentation researching ICH also need to be aware of any possible gender bias in the design of their research, including in the activities of community-based investigators, while differences in gender roles vis-à-vis ICH are themselves an important area for research. The question of how to approach gender cannot be ignored even when selecting elements for international inscription and cases that may merit further exploration include elements that demonstrate clear gender-based divisions of labour, single-sex elements and those which bind the whole community while expressing traditional gender roles. In this regard it is noteworthy that upon the request of the 2003 Convention's Intergovernmental Committee, UNESCO recently revised the forms for inscription to guide submitting states to be explicit about gender.



Traditional manufacturing of children's wooden toys in Hrvatsko Zagorje (Croatia).

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### Gender-based skills

ICH-related knowledge, skills and know-how frequently rely on informal gender-based modes of transmission, and this raises important questions as to the potential impacts of safeguarding measures on the bearers and the ICH itself. Falconry, for example, inscribed in 2012 as a multinational element, is almost exclusively transmitted through a male master/pupil apprenticeship, whereas the pottery art of the Mangoro in Côte d'Ivoire (referred to in the Periodic Report submitted to the ICH Intergovernmental Committee in 2013) has been transmitted by women to girls

for centuries. In some cases, in contrast, the mode of transmission has evolved over time from a single-sex one to a more open form of transmission. It is worth considering whether gender-bound attitudes may contribute to problems in transmission and how these might be addressed. It is also important to examine how far gender issues are considered when designing ICH safeguarding and management plans. As gendered forms of ICH can serve important social and cultural needs, for individuals and groups as well as the wider community, it is important to take this into account in safeguarding.

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# News

A new strategy has been devised to reduce grazing pressure on Simien National Park (Ethiopia) World Heritage site and its surroundings through measures that harmonize grazing and conservation needs. The implementation of the strategy will help the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority to achieve the desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the Danger List.

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Simien National Park (Ethiopia).

© Indrik Myneur

## UNESCO workshop considers challenges to Africa

In a workshop held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris from 9 to 11 September, experts and representatives of organizations involved in African World Heritage met to exchange views on the way forward.

The World Heritage Centre's Africa Unit Chief, Edmond Moukala, focused on the challenges of implementing the Global Strategy for a Representative, Balanced and Credible World Heritage List in the Africa region. He also chaired a discussion on Conservation and Sustainable Development: Current Situation and Challenges, which explored the emerging trends and opportunities of conservation and sustainable development, the approaches used for addressing these needs and the synergies created between conservation and development.

Webber Ndoro, Director of the African World Heritage Fund (AWHF), gave an overview of the past seven years' activities

of the fund as well as highlighting the prospects for the next decade of activities. Jack Vuyo, chair of the AWHF and Acting Director General, South Africa Department of Art and Culture, also addressed the group.

New project proposals were presented by the Centre for Heritage Development in Africa (CHDA) and the African Heritage School (École du Patrimoine Africain – EPA). These activities, which will include a regional Youth Forum on World Heritage in Africa, will fall into the year-long celebration in 2016 of the 10th anniversary of the founding of the AWHF.

The workshop resulted in a draft report, which was presented to the Africa Group of UNESCO (UNESCO African Member States) on 11 September. The report will contribute to an international conference on Conservation and Development for World Heritage in the Africa Region, which is being organized by the World Heritage Centre and the AWHF for May 2016.

Ahead of the two-day workshop, the Africa Unit of the World Heritage Centre and the AWHF held a meeting with the World Heritage Advisory Bodies (ICCROM, ICOMOS and IUCN) in order to discuss and develop a more strategic approach to offering 'upstream' support for nominations from the Africa region.

## Nine new members elected to World Heritage Committee



Delegates at the 20th General Assembly.

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The 20th General Assembly of the States Parties to the World Heritage Convention met from 18 to 20 November 2015 at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, chaired by H.E. Mr Jose Filipe Mendes Moraes Cabral, Ambassador Extraordinary and plenipotentiary of Portugal to France, convening the 191 States Parties to the World Heritage Convention.

During the session, the States Parties elected new members to the World Heritage Committee and discussed the World Heritage Fund, the Global Strategy for a Representative, Balanced and Credible World Heritage List, and the future of the World Heritage Convention.

Nine States Parties were elected to the World Heritage Committee: Angola, Azerbaijan, Burkina Faso, Cuba, Indonesia, Kuwait, Tunisia, United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe. The United Republic of Tanzania also became a new member of the Bureau, joining Lebanon, Peru, the Philippines and Poland.

The World Heritage Committee meets once a year to review the state of conservation of World Heritage sites and inscribe new ones on the List, which today numbers 1,031 sites in 163 countries, with 802 cultural, 197 natural and 32 mixed properties. The next session of the Committee will be held from 10 to 20 July 2016 in Istanbul (Turkey).



Participants in the workshop.

© Modibo Bagayoko (Direction nationale du patrimoine culturel, Mali)

## Lake Ohrid: transboundary protection

The second Transboundary Platform Meeting of the European Union-funded project, Towards Strengthened Governance of the Shared Transboundary Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Lake Ohrid Region, was held on 2 October 2015 in Ohrid, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). This initiative is part of a total of six meetings, over a 36-month period, aiming to support the Albanian and Macedonian governments in their efforts to protect the Lake Ohrid area and set up transboundary management structures for effective heritage management.

Two-thirds of Lake Ohrid is inscribed on the World Heritage List on the Macedonian side of the lake. The project supports efforts by the national authorities in Albania to prepare a nomination file for the extension

of World Heritage status to the remaining third of Lake Ohrid, in Albania. In August 2015 UNESCO Director-General, Irina Bokova, and the Minister of Environment of the Republic of Albania, Lefter Koka, signed an agreement confirming Albanian financial support of 170,000 euros for the project.

Some twenty participants, including officials from the two countries' environment and culture ministries, and from the region's municipalities, as well as UNESCO and the Advisory Bodies to the World Heritage Committee (ICOMOS and IUCN) took part in the meeting.

The meeting addressed the main factors affecting the natural and cultural heritage of the Lake Ohrid region. Although international and national protection measures have contributed to its conservation, unplanned urban development, inadequate waste water and solid waste management, habitat alteration, destruction and depletion of natural resources, mining activities, infrastructure development and intensive

tourism activities continue to threaten the region's heritage.

The Transboundary Platform Meetings are intended to improve and facilitate bilateral cooperation between representatives from both Albanian and FYROM local and central administrations, the tourism sector, and those in charge of urban and rural development, culture, nature protection, resource management and the environment. The main aim of the platform is to ensure greater synergies between existing transboundary management structures, such as the Joint Secretary of the Watershed Management Committee for Ohrid Lake, as well as ongoing initiatives such as the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere designations, in order to enhance management of the Lake Ohrid region in the two countries.

The Lake Ohrid region project also covers the profiling of the transboundary area and its sustainable tourism opportunities and the implementation of a waste awareness campaign.



Participants in the Second Transboundary Meeting for the Lake Ohrid region initiative.

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## Grands Sites de France: identification and management

The World Heritage Centre participated in the two-day annual meeting of the Grands Sites de France Network, Values and Dynamic Landscapes of the Grands Sites de France, held in the Vézère Valley (France) from 1 to 2 October 2015, by contributing to an understanding of the identification and management of World Heritage Cultural Landscapes.

The meeting brought together some 200 participants, including site managers of the Grands Sites de France, government and elected officials, as well as professionals and natural site, heritage and tourism experts to reflect on and find specific solutions to the problems of dynamic landscape preservation. The Grands Sites de France Network, founded in 2000, is made up of exceptional, fragile, protected and listed cultural landscapes, with the aim of their sustainable development.

The two-day meeting's main focus was on an issue which is relevant to many World

Heritage sites: how to allow for change and dynamic evolution, especially in living cultural landscapes, without compromising the Outstanding Universal Value of the sites. Panel groups worked on the key topics of conservation, communication, site management and landscape/environment issues facing large-scale infrastructure for renewable energies.

World Heritage Centre Director, Mechtild Rössler, gave a keynote address at the meeting, Cultural Landscapes of the World Heritage Convention: Principles of Identification and Management. Discussion focused not only on specific issues and problems relating to such World Heritage properties as The Causses and the Cévennes, Mediterranean agro-pastoral Cultural Landscape, and Prehistoric Sites and Decorated Caves of the Vézère Valley, but also on general questions including criteria to be used, renominations and management that involves all stakeholders at sites.

Another issue debated during the meeting was the question of the double designation of sites as Geoparks and UNESCO Biosphere Reserves. Presentations were also made on climate change adaptation, particularly in coastal zones.

## UK rejects bid for wind park off Jurassic Coast

The World Heritage Centre has welcomed the United Kingdom's decision on 11 September 2015 to reject planning permission for the Navitus Bay Wind Park proposal off the coasts of Dorset and the Isle of Wight, which include the World Heritage site of Dorset and East Devon Coast.

This decision followed a detailed application review process, which took into consideration the importance of the World Heritage site, inscribed in 2001 because of its outstanding combination of globally significant geological and geomorphological features. The property comprises eight sections along 155 km of largely undeveloped coast. The property's geology displays approximately 185 million years of the Earth's history. It is renowned for its contribution to earth science investigations for over 300 years, helping to foster major contributions to many aspects of geology, palaeontology and geomorphology.

The UK Government considered that the offshore elements of the project would bring about changes in the way the World Heritage site would be experienced or enjoyed in its surroundings and would have adverse implications for the site's significances and its Outstanding Universal Value, the basis for the site's inscription.

The World Heritage Centre welcomes the decision that favoured the conservation of designated assets of the highest significance and value, and that took into consideration the impact of the development project on the setting of the site and carefully measured its possible impact.



World Heritage Centre Director, Mechtild Rössler, at the annual meeting of the Grand Sites de France Network.



Dorset and East Devon Coast (United Kingdom).

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## Nomination workshop in Mali

A workshop dedicated to the preparation of African nominations to the World Heritage List was held from 5 to 16 October 2015 in Segou (Mali) under the auspices of the African World Heritage Fund. The training, carried out within the framework of the Global Strategy for a Representative, Balanced and Credible World Heritage List, brought together twenty-three participants, resource persons and coordinators from eight countries in French-speaking Africa.

The workshop was divided into theoretical and practical aspects. Participants first discussed the essential elements in the preparation of a nomination to the World Heritage List, and the challenges and opportunities provided by the Global Strategy and African World Heritage. They also examined the concept of Outstanding Universal Value and the criteria for inscription, as well as the connections among the various UNESCO conventions, serial, transboundary and transnational World Heritage sites.

Using a 'learning by doing' methodology, the eleven participants also had an opportunity to present their nomination files and receive accurate feedback and advice. The workshop focused on eight nomination files: Ancient Metallurgy Sites of Burkina Faso (Burkina Faso), Tiébébé Royal Court (Burkina Faso), Zakouma National Park (Chad), Medina Fort (Mali), Sacred House of Kangaba in Mande land (Mali), Vestibules of the Founder of the Bamanan Kingdom (Mali), Banc d'Arguin National Park (Mauritania) and Diawling National Park (Mauritania).



Deputy Mayor of Segou (Mali).

© Eric Baker

## Shell's departure from Arctic great news for Wrangel Island

On 27 September, six weeks after it began exploratory drilling off the north-west coast of Alaska, Royal Dutch Shell announced that it is abandoning its quest for Arctic oil. Shell's decision to cease operations in the Chukchi Sea is excellent news for the Natural System of Wrangel Island Reserve (Russian Federation) nearby.

This is the only marine World Heritage site in the Arctic. It is home to the world's largest population of Pacific walrus, with up to 100,000 animals congregating in the island's rookeries, and the highest density of ancestral polar bear dens. In the summer, it is a major feeding ground for gray whale and the northernmost nesting ground for 100 migratory bird species.

This Arctic jewel, and the wealth of wildlife it supports, was threatened by Shell's Chukchi Sea operations. Shell's own risk assessments found that plumes from

an oil spill could reach the buffer zone of Wrangel Island Reserve within thirty days, and a study by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management confirmed potential impacts to the reserve. The World Heritage Committee noted serious concern about the Chukchi Sea oil exploration at its 2015 session in Bonn (Germany).

At that meeting, the Committee reiterated that oil exploration or exploitation is incompatible with World Heritage status, which is supported by the commitments made by industry leaders not to undertake such activities within World Heritage properties. The Committee added that mineral, oil and gas projects developed near World Heritage sites should not be approved until it is clear the projects will not impact on their Outstanding Universal Value.

In recent decades, industry leaders have become increasingly sensitive to the implications of World Heritage status. Shell's decision to leave the Chukchi Sea is another step forward in protecting World Heritage sites from the threat of inappropriate development, and ensuring these treasures are protected for the enjoyment of future generations.



Wrangel Island (Russian Federation).

© NOAA PMEL

## Twinning of marine sites for conservation

The West Norwegian Fjords – Geirangerfjord and Nærøysfjord (Norway) World Heritage site and Glacier Bay National Park (part of a large, binational World Heritage site encompassing protected areas in Canada and the United States), have joined forces to exchange knowledge in an effort to strengthen the conservation of marine heritage. Under the auspices of the Marine World Heritage Programme, site managers from both properties met in August 2015 to discuss their experiences in water and air quality measures, in managing and protecting large marine fjords and local community benefits as popular cruise ship destinations.

Glacier Bay National Park, inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1979, has over thirty-five years of experience managing cruise ship traffic. The competitive tourism visitation system developed in Glacier Bay is one of the most innovative in the world. By setting a limit to the number of ships allowed

access, shipping companies compete for entries into the bay by committing to more ecologically sustainable operations. These include the reduction of impacts to wildlife and air and water quality such as refraining from discharging wastewater in the bay, using low-sulphur fuel, developing whale-avoidance programmes and supporting an interpretive programme that places park staff on ships to educate visitors. The fees collected from cruise ships are a critical revenue source for Glacier Bay, generating nearly 50 per cent of the park's management budget.

The West Norwegian Fjords site, for its part, has been working hard to build a greener, more sustainable tourism industry. Site managers are in the process of developing a Green Fjord initiative to facilitate 'transport without a trace'. This includes electric scooters, zero emission cars and public transport and green technology innovation that could provide a boost to the region's private companies. Mitigating the ecological footprint of the cruise ships is a critical step in realizing a zero-emissions future for the fjords.

'We have identified challenges which Glacier Bay may already have found

sustainable solutions for. Therefore it is extremely important for us to move forward with a partnership where we can learn more from the best practices in Glacier Bay,' said Katrin Blomvik, manager of the West Norwegian Fjords, at the August meeting.

The meeting was just one step in what is intended to be a long and fruitful relationship between two sites that have very similar physical and marine environments. 'Glacier Bay and West Norwegian Fjords share similar patterns of tourism, especially cruise tourism. Both share cultural connections of people to the lands over many centuries. It is the desire of both World Heritage sites to maintain local communities as livable places, manage tourism sustainably, and prioritize connections with the next generation of stewards,' added Philip N. Hooge, Superintendent of Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve.

The Marine World Heritage Programme will be sharing the knowledge accrued by this form of cooperation with the many other marine sites in its network that are accessed by cruise ships, as well as with those working to reduce environmental impacts from other tourism vehicles.



West Norwegian Fjords – Geirangerfjord and Nærøysfjord (Norway).

© Andrea Albertino

## Protection of World Heritage in Romania

A national training workshop on Protecting World Heritage: Disaster Risk Management and Sustainable Tourism Planning in Romania was held from 30 September to 3 October in Sighișoara. The workshop, organized jointly by the UNESCO Venice Office and the Ministry of Culture of Romania, in cooperation with the City of Sighișoara, brought together some forty participants from all World Heritage sites in Romania, as well as from ICCROM and the World Heritage Centre.

Participants concluded that in order to improve disaster risk management (DRM) greater cooperation and coordination are needed among cultural heritage authorities and civil protection agencies. They recommended that a detailed needs assessment for DRM be carried out at all World Heritage sites in Romania. Following this assessment, the workshop suggested that detailed risk management plans for all sites be prepared in conjunction with all main actors and stakeholders. These plans would then be integrated into the broader World Heritage management sites.

Citing the example of the Historic Centre of Sighișoara World Heritage site, participants pointed out that the property is exposed to various hazards, including

earthquake, fire, floods and landslide, and concluded that there is scope for an in-depth risk analysis, through a multi-hazard approach, which should provide the basis for corresponding DRM measures at the site, and which would be integrated into the management plan.

The workshop also recommended the completion of the baseline assessment of sustainable tourism presented during the meeting and which would cover every site inscribed on the World Heritage list in Romania. The baseline assessment is one of the tools being developed by the UNESCO World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism programme. Participants also called for stepped-up consultation on sustainable tourism among heritage and tourism authorities. It recommended the reinforcement of networking and cooperation among different World Heritage sites, as well as with other natural and cultural resources adjacent to the sites, in order to develop integrated tourism products and promotion.

The participants committed to advocating for funding at all administrative levels and to joining efforts for fundraising to improve tourism management, including from the private sector. They also called for the reinvestment of part of tourism revenues from World Heritage sites in the conservation and management of cultural heritage.

During the workshop the City of Bath (United Kingdom) presented a tourism case study.

## World Heritage associations in Europe meet for the first time

World Heritage associations in Europe met on 15 and 16 October 2015 at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg (France) to exchange ideas on future cooperation.

During the course of the meeting 100 participants from twenty countries and ten national European World Heritage associations/networks were able to compare the different types of legal status under which they work, as well as the mandate and membership of their national associations.

The establishment of a European network of World Heritage site managers was one of the recommendations of the Action Plan for the First Cycle of Periodic Reporting in Europe, adopted by the World Heritage Committee at its 30th session in 2006. It has been reiterated in the Action Plan of the Second Cycle of Periodic Reporting adopted by the Committee at its 39th session in 2015.

The meeting was also the occasion for site managers and national focal points to present good practices and challenges and to examine existing or potential partnerships between States Parties and national site manager networks, which often include local authorities, professional associations, academic and research bodies as well as representatives of civil society.

A second meeting is to take place in Tarragon (Spain) in 2016 where subjects such as participative approaches in site management will be discussed.

The meeting was held under the auspices of the Association for World Heritage Properties in France (ABFPM) and the city of Strasbourg in cooperation with the World Heritage Centre, with the support of the Ministry of Ecology and the Ministry of Culture of France.



Historic Centre of Sighișoara (Romania).

© Anna Hesser

## Rainforests of the Atsinanana

A Reactive Monitoring Mission to Masoala National Park, one of the six national parks that make up the World Heritage site Rainforests of the Atsinanana (Madagascar), carried out from 26 September to 3 October 2015 by representatives of the World Heritage Centre and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), concluded that the conditions necessary for the property's removal from the List of World Heritage in Danger have not yet been met.

The rainforests site comprises six national parks distributed along the eastern part of the island. These relict forests are critically important for maintaining ongoing ecological processes necessary for the survival of Madagascar's unique biodiversity, which reflects the island's geological history. The rainforests are inscribed for their importance to both ecological and biological processes as well as their biodiversity and the threatened species they support. Many species are threatened, especially lemurs.

The illicit exploitation of rosewood and ebony in Masoala and Marojejy National Parks is one of the main reasons for which the property was placed on the Danger List in 2010. The quantity of declared rosewood stock still remains unclear. The mission recommended that the Madagascar authorities, with stakeholders' support, clarify this point.

Although the mission found that exploitation of rosewood had diminished, its impact on the state of conservation of the park is significant. Damage caused by the opening up of transport routes through the forest was observed, as well as secondary impacts due to the hunting of lemurs and other animals.

While the mission noted that the implication in conservation activities of communities living near the park is a major and laudable priority of Madagascar National Parks, it concluded that the authority does not have the financial means to continue supporting the local communities. The lack of an alternative economic activity in the Maroantsetra region presents a considerable danger to the resurgence of illegal logging and

other activities inimical to the Outstanding Universal Value of the site.

The mission pointed out that deforestation exerts pressure on the site, particularly in Zahamena and Ranomafane National Parks, where deforestation is sometimes associated with bushfires.

In addition the mission found that illegal mining is an imminent danger to the ecological integrity of the other parks in the site. The scale of illegal mining (number of people involved, surface area impacted, ecological impacts caused) has not been thoroughly documented and merits further investigation and corrective action.

The mission noted that collaboration among representatives of the environmental sector and other sectors should be reinforced, and approaches to donors should be coordinated, particularly to support landscape-scale conservation and development initiatives in line with the Outstanding Universal Value of the site. It also noted that patrolling in the parks should be stepped up and concluded that a greater awareness of the regulatory texts should be encouraged.



White-headed lemur (*Eulemur albifrons*), Masoala National Park (Madagascar).

© Frank Vassen

## Grazing pressure reduction strategy: stakeholders decide

A new strategy has been devised to reduce grazing pressure on Simien National Park (Ethiopia) World Heritage site and its surroundings through measures that harmonize grazing and conservation needs.

Simien Mountains National Park in northern Ethiopia is a spectacular landscape, where massive erosion over millions of years has created jagged mountain peaks, deep valleys and sharp precipices dropping some 1,500 m. The park is of global significance for biodiversity conservation because it is home to globally threatened species, including the iconic Walia ibex, a wild mountain goat found nowhere else in the world, the Gelada baboon and the Ethiopian wolf.

However, the park has been under serious threat from the expansion of settlement and cultivation, overgrazing and deforestation and was therefore placed on the List of World Heritage in Danger in 1996.

In order to address overgrazing and land degradation in the park, a Grazing Pressure Reduction Strategy was developed through a consultative participatory process involving local communities and other key stakeholders, under the auspices of the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF), in collaboration with the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority (EWCA), in

partnership with the World Heritage Centre and with the financial support of the UNESCO/Netherlands Funds-in-Trust.

From November 2014 consultative meetings were organized with thirty communities and EWCA park staff. Maps for land use change of the park and resource use zones were generated based on these consultations and research data. Six consultative workshops were subsequently held, bringing together some 500 participants from government agencies, universities, administrative bodies and local communities.

This strategy provides for a zoning scheme, which includes no grazing/protected zone core areas, controlled/limited grazing zones, and sustainable resources use zones. The strategy further calls for grazing rights to be limited to eligible users. Sustainable stocking rates are to be determined for limited/controlled grazing zones.

The strategy provides for the development of sustainable livelihood options, increasing the World Heritage site's staff capacity, strengthening of law enforcement, updating the General Management Plan and enhanced monitoring, including ecological monitoring.

Finally, the AWF in collaboration with EWCA has developed a new tourism plan for Simien National Park in order to ensure responsible tourism development, with fair and equitable sharing of benefits generated from tourism.

The implementation of the strategy will help EWCA to achieve the desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the Danger List.

## Director-General condemns destruction of vestiges in the Ancient City of Bosra

The Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, has condemned the destruction of parts of the Ancient City of Bosra (Syrian Arab Republic) during combats in the World Heritage site on 22 December 2015, as confirmed by the Syrian Directorate of Antiquities and Museums.

There is fear of further deterioration to the site due to severe damage to the western courtyard adjacent to Bosra's 2nd-century Roman theatre and to parts of the Ayyubid citadel, which surrounds it.

'The destructions sustained by Bosra represent a further escalation in the horror of war and must be stopped at once to allow the concerned parties to consolidate the agreement reached on the ground to preserve the irreplaceable heritage of Bosra,' declared Ms Bokova.

'The protection of cultural sites is part and parcel of the protection of human lives as it is essential for the restoration of peace in Syria. The Roman theatre of Bosra embodies the rich diversity of the identity of the people of Syria and I call on culture professionals worldwide, and particularly on the art market, to be extremely vigilant so as to fight against the traffic in artefacts from Bosra,' the Director-General added.

The Ancient City of Bosra is a major archaeological site, containing ruins from Roman, Byzantine and Muslim times. The 2nd-century Roman theatre—exceptional due to its architecture and state of conservation—was most probably built under Trajan. Subsequently, between 481 and 1251, it became part of the fortifications, which formed a powerful citadel guarding the road to Damascus.



Simien National Park (Ethiopia).

© Rod Waddington

## Capacity-building in Abu Dhabi

Following the inscription of the first of the United Arab Emirates property on the World Heritage List, the Abu Dhabi Tourism and Culture Authority (TCA) organized the Al Ain World Heritage Site Educational Kit production and Implementation: Capacity Building Workshop in collaboration with the World Heritage Centre and UNESCO Doha Office. The activity was held in Al Ain from 24 to 26 August 2015, bringing together some sixty professionals.

Participants were involved in presentations as well as panel discussions, field visits and interactive sessions. They looked into the draft World Heritage sites of the Al Ain educational manual produced by the TCA and provided feedback on needs, in terms of both educational materials and site interpretation.

The workshop participants recommended that the educational kit include a site map, worksheets and thematic lessons. It was recommended that kit production should go through three phases: background research, content production and kit piloting. The workshop also pointed out that key stakeholders, an advisory group and a teachers' group need to be involved at various stages of kit production to insure the quality of the end product. The TCA and the Abu Dhabi Education Council representatives also recognized the need for the resource manual to be piloted in schools for evaluation.

Finally the workshop noted that successful and sustainable implementation of the kit will rely heavily on maintaining communication and collaboration between the Abu Dhabi TCA and Education Council in supporting the implementation of the kit.



Al Ain (United Arab Emirates).

© Marcia O'Connor

## 2015–2016 World Heritage map published

The latest version of the World Heritage map, produced by UNESCO World Heritage Centre and National Geographic Maps with the generous support of Turkey, can now be ordered from the World Heritage Centre website.

The principal image on the map presents the historic areas of Istanbul in Turkey, the country hosting the next session of the World Heritage Committee in July 2016.

This poster-sized wall map features all 1,031 World Heritage properties and is illustrated with magnificent photos and explanatory captions. It also presents brief explanations of the World Heritage Convention and its related Marine, Earthen Architecture and other conservation programmes.

- Make a donation and receive a free World Heritage map: [whc.unesco.org/en/donation](http://whc.unesco.org/en/donation).
- Order your copy now in English, French or Spanish versions: [whc.unesco.org/en/map](http://whc.unesco.org/en/map).



## Korean National Commission for UNESCO donates US\$100,000 to World Heritage Fund

On 1 November 2015, the Korean National Commission for UNESCO announced a donation of US\$100,000 to the World Heritage Fund.

The announcement was made at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris by the Korean National Commission Secretary-General, Mr Dong-seok Min, in the presence of UNESCO Director-General, Ms Irina Bokova, and the Director of the World Heritage Centre, Ms Mechthild Rössler.

The Korean National Commission for UNESCO has been publishing the World Heritage Map in the Korean language since 2013, in close cooperation with the World Heritage Centre.

In February 2015, the Commission launched a major fundraising programme involving the Korean business sector and civil society in support of the World Heritage Convention. This donation is the first concrete result of a firm commitment to expand the cooperation developed in recent years.

In the context of ever-growing threats to World Heritage sites around the world and increasingly complex conservation challenges, partnerships with the private sector and foundations have become vital to sustain UNESCO's work.

The funds will support the World Heritage partnerships for conservation programme, in particular, the mobilization of new partnerships with the private sector and foundations in support of sites on the List of World Heritage in Danger and other cultural and natural sites under threat.



Mr Dong-seok Min, Korean National Commission Secretary-General, and Ms Irina Bokova, UNESCO Director-General.

© UNESCO / UNESCO

## Quality guides on the Silk Road

As part of a groundbreaking initiative, Enhancing Silk Road Interpretation and Quality Guides Training, over twenty-five participants from China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan were officially certified as Silk Road Heritage Guides in September 2015 by the World Federation of Tourist Guide Associations (WFTGA), UNESCO and UNWTO (World Tourism Organization). By completing the course in Khiva (Uzbekistan), the certified guides now form part of an international pool of Silk Road guides and trainers, playing an integral role in strengthening the tourism sector's capacity to improve livelihoods and safeguard heritage along the Silk Road.

The new initiative is designed to address the principles of sustainable growth, community development, heritage management and conservation along two Silk Road heritage corridors crossing the five participating countries (China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan). The initiative is part of the joint UNESCO/UNWTO Silk Road Heritage Corridors Tourism Strategy, an umbrella

project that aims to guarantee a balance between tourism promotion and heritage conservation along two Silk Road heritage corridors: the Chang'an-Tianshan heritage corridor crossing China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan; and the Amu-Darya heritage corridor crossing Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The training was hosted by the UNESCO Tashkent Office and the Republic of Uzbekistan, and jointly organized by UNWTO, UNESCO and WFTGA, with the kind support of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science of the Netherlands and UNESCO.

The WFTGA-designed two-week course focused on transboundary cooperation and provided heritage guides operating across the Silk Road with a unified set of guiding skills and specialized know-how concerning onsite interpretation, presentation and management, based on the *Silk Road Guides Training Handbook* specifically developed for the initiative.

This important innovative training is expected to be replicated in other Silk Road heritage corridor countries, where participants will form a national reservoir of highly experienced tourist guides, improving the attractiveness and quality of their destinations and enhancing the overall visitor experience.

## Jaeger-LeCoultre helps to combat illegal fishing at Cocos Island

Thanks to long-time World Heritage partner Jaeger-LeCoultre, the efforts of Cocos Island National Park (Costa Rica) to fight illegal fishing recently had a major boost. The Swiss watch manufacture has donated 30,000 euros, raised through the auction of diving watches inspired by World Heritage, helping to maintain the park's patrol boats and fund the installation of a new radar system that facilitates remote monitoring.

Cocos Island, located 550 km off the Pacific Coast of Costa Rica, is popular with divers, who consider it one of the best places in the world to see hammerhead and white tip sharks, manta rays, tuna and dolphins. A new initiative, led by the Island Marine Conservation Area and the Friends of the Cocos Island Foundation, is working to fight the problem of illegal fishing, which threatens wildlife and tourism in the area, through a combination of more boats on the water and enhanced monitoring technology.

Thanks in part to the generous support of Jaeger-LeCoultre, Cocos Island's efforts in the fight against illegal fishing have made major strides. This support has included the installation of radar equipment on land that will significantly increase monitoring capacity, and a crowdfunding campaign that raised US\$200,000 for the purchase of a new boat. It also supported the creation of a new surveillance centre, modelled on the Great Barrier Reef's intelligence unit. The compliance and enforcement workshop, convened by the World Heritage Marine Programme last July, where officials from the Great Barrier Reef shared their best practices with site managers from the Cocos Island World Heritage site, helped inform the centre's design.



Silk Road Guides Training in Khiva (Uzbekistan).

© UNESCO / Muhayyo

## Sustainable tourism workshops use new tools

An initiation workshop on sustainable tourism at the World Heritage site, Cultural Landscape of Bali Province: the *Subak* System as a Manifestation of the *Tri Hita Karana* Philosophy, was held in Bali (Indonesia) from 21 to 23 October 2015, as part of the UNESCO project, The Power of Culture: Supporting Community-Based Management and Sustainable Tourism at World Heritage Sites in Malaysia and South-East Asia. The workshop was developed with the support of the Government of Malaysia via the Malaysia Funds-in-Trust, under the Malaysia-UNESCO Cooperation Programme (MUCP).

The project, a regional effort in the implementation of the UNESCO World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism (WH+ST) programme, uses a 'How To' toolkit developed by the World Heritage Centre. This toolkit aims at helping a World Heritage property to develop a sustainable tourism strategy in order to enhance broad stakeholder engagement in planning, developing and managing sustainable tourism, as well as providing World Heritage stakeholders with the capacity and resources to manage tourism efficiently, responsibly and sustainably, based on the local community context and

needs. Similar workshops have recently been organized in the Rice Terraces of the Philippine Cordilleras (Philippines) and Melaka and George Town, Historic Cities of the Straits of Malacca (Malaysia), using the 'How To' guides. These workshops are the first implementation of the WH+ST programme in South-East Asia where the 'How To' guides have been used.

The thirty-five participants in the three-day workshop in Bali were from the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Ministry of Tourism, Cultural and Tourism Offices in Bali Province and its five regencies, and academics from universities in Bali. They developed a series of strategic objectives, which included ensuring that all stakeholders have a common understanding and appreciation of Outstanding Universal Value to promote the safeguarding and protection of the World Heritage property. The meeting also noted that another strategic objective was to ensure that tourism development supports the authenticity of the Cultural Landscape of Bali Province.

The workshop determined that a third strategic objective was the empowering of local communities to engage directly in sustainable tourism in order to improve their welfare. Finally the workshop insisted on the importance of encouraging the development of sustainable tourism products and services while respecting local cultural values.

A second workshop is to be held in February 2016 after the Ministries of Education and Tourism of Indonesia consult on the results of this first workshop.

## World Heritage Sustainable Tourism Toolkit

A new World Heritage Sustainable Tourism Toolkit is now available to help site managers and other stakeholders to identify the most suitable solutions for their local circumstances and develop a sense of how to structure destination management based on the heritage values of the property.

The Sustainable Tourism Toolkit, developed through a collaboration between James Rebanks Consulting and the UNESCO World Heritage Sustainable Tourism Programme, with the support of the IRIS Foundation, consists of a series of ten online user-friendly 'How To' guides that explain ten critically important ideas for sustainable tourism in under 20 minutes' reading per idea.

The ten ideas aim at making available to everyone involved in managing tourism at World Heritage sites the knowledge and approaches that have emerged in the most progressive sites. The guides include case studies and have been designed to evolve with new challenges, which would supply new case studies.

Behind each guide there is a Pinterest board of best practice examples and documents of value that users can access and explore in their own time. This is one of the best collections of documents on World Heritage sustainable tourism gathered in one place on the internet.



Initiation workshop on sustainable tourism held in Bali (Indonesia).

© UNESCO / Jakarta Office

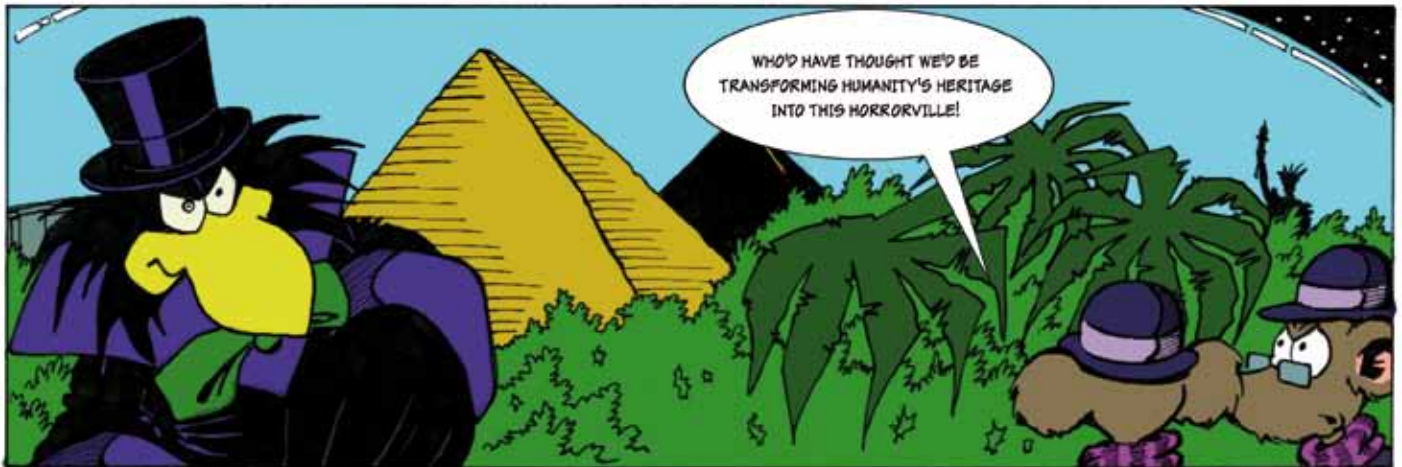
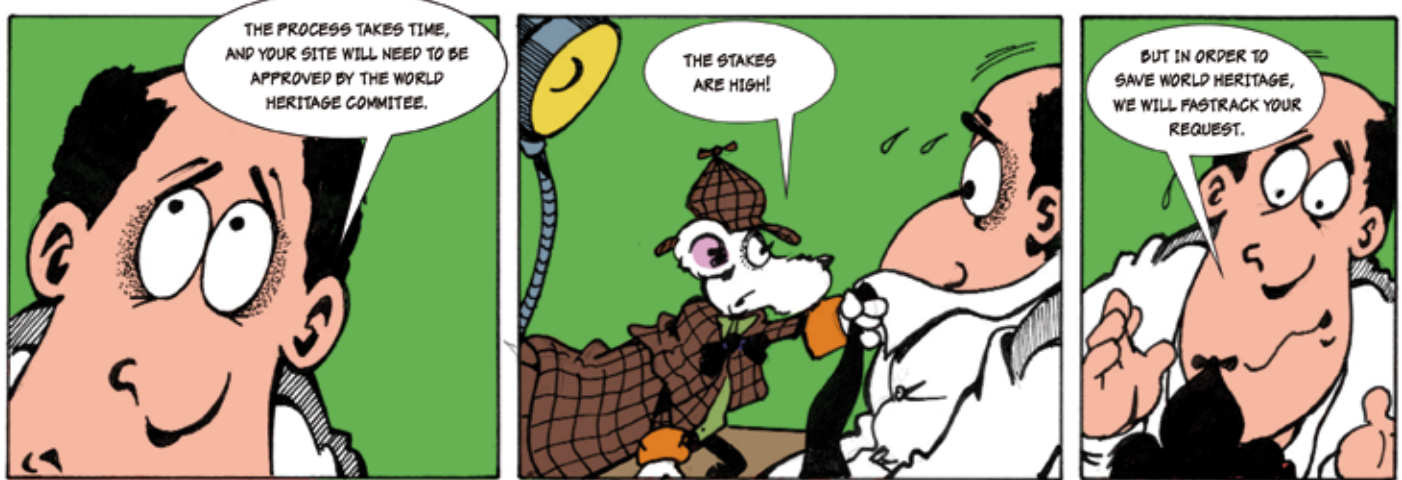




# The Case of the Lost World Heritage, 16th episode

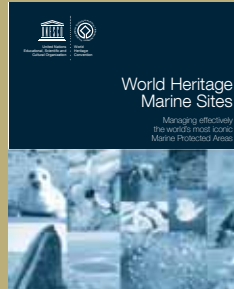
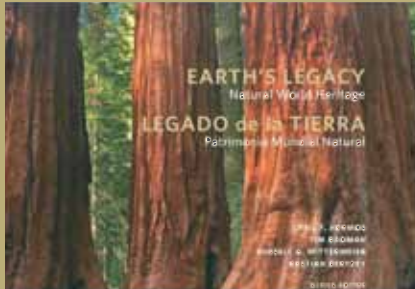
A series of World Heritage comic strips featuring Rattus Holmes and Dr Felis Watson, the famous pet detectives of Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson, will soon be published. The sleuths save the World Heritage sites from evil Moriarty, who plans to steal them for an interplanetary theme park. They are part of a series co-published by UNESCO and Edge Group, UK, which includes other adventures of Holmes and Watson in *Rattus Holmes in the Case of the Spoilsports* (about doping in sports) and *Rattus Holmes and the Case of the World Water Crisis*. It will also be available on the World Heritage Centre website <http://whc.unesco.org>. For more information about Edge Group and their work, write to [edgesword@yahoo.com](mailto:edgesword@yahoo.com).

The story continues in the next issue of *World Heritage*...



HERITAGE SITES MUST BE TREATED WITH RESPECT.





## Earth's Legacy: Natural World Heritage

**CEMEX**  
English only  
<http://www.cemex.com>

The global building materials company CEMEX has created a joint project with UNESCO, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Conservation International and WILD Foundation to promote awareness of natural sites of great relevance to all. The protection of these unique and diverse places requires great effort and represents a major challenge. Together with four conservation organizations, CEMEX commits to building awareness about natural World Heritage sites, helping to promote and develop a culture of appreciation and respect for nature among its own stakeholders and, by extension, the international community. The book includes impressive images by some of the world's most respected conservation photographers, as well as descriptions of over 100 amazing natural sites that need to be protected.

## World Heritage Marine Sites Managing effectively the world's most iconic Marine Protected Areas: A best practice guide

**By Fanny Douvere, World Heritage Centre**  
English only  
<http://whc.unesco.org/en/marine-programme/>

This best practice guide lays the groundwork for a common approach to a more pro-active, future-oriented management of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) around the world. The step-by-step guidance shows how defining a clearer vision of what MPAs can and should look like in another ten to twenty years is key to understanding the actions that need to be taken today. Because they are so visible, World Heritage marine sites are in a unique position to lead by example as the global community seeks to improve management in MPAs the world over and achieve the Convention on Biological Diversity's Aichi Targets by 2020.

## Gender, Place & Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography

**Volume 23, Issue 1, 2016**  
English only  
<http://www.tandfonline.com/>

This peer-reviewed journal published ten times a year by Taylor and Francis provides a forum for debate in human geography and related disciplines on theoretically informed research concerned with gender issues. The editors seek articles based on primary research that address the particularities and intersections of gender, race, ethnicity, age, (dis)ability, sexuality, class, culture and place; feminist, anti-racist, critical and radical geographies of space, place, nature and the environment; feminist geographies of difference, resistance, marginality and/or spatial negotiation; and critical methodology.

## The Selous in Africa: A long way from anywhere

**By Robert J. Ross**  
**Officina Libraria**  
English only  
<http://www.officialibraria.com>

Selous Game Reserve in the United Republic of Tanzania is one of the last remaining great wilderness areas in Africa. Inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1982, the Selous is Africa's oldest and largest protected area and remains one of the continent's greatest undisturbed ecosystems. Teeming with life – including one of the largest elephant populations remaining on the African continent, more lions than any other protected area on the continent, large packs of wild dogs, and vast herds of buffalo – the Selous is a crown jewel of biodiversity and wilderness preservation. The book features nearly 400 photographs of this extraordinary place. Original essays on the history and ecology of the Selous are complemented by generous excerpts from *Sand Rivers*, Peter Matthiessen's beautifully written book about a safari he undertook there.

## From the Past and for the Future: Safeguarding the Cultural Heritage of Afghanistan – Jam and Herat

**Edited by Junhi Han, World Heritage Centre**  
English only  
**UNESCO Publishing**

This publication was originally conceived to promote the UNESCO/Italy Funds-in-Trust project, Emergency Consolidation and Restoration of Monuments in Herat and Jam (Afghanistan), which was concluded in 2013. The project allowed UNESCO to carry out emergency conservation work, particularly on the Minaret of Jam and the Fifth Minaret of Herat. After decades of neglect due to civil conflicts, the state of these two monuments was seriously deteriorating with the latter being on the verge of collapse. The publication also aims to illustrate Afghanistan's rich and colourful diversity by presenting the sites currently included on its Tentative List for potential inscription, along with a brief cultural history. All these sites have played crucial roles not only in the culture and history of the country, but also the region.

## World Heritage, Tourism and Identity: Inscription and Co-production

**Edited by Laurent Bourdeau, Maria Gravari-Barbas and Mike Robinson**  
English only  
**Ashgate Publishing**  
<http://www.ashgate.com>

This volume, through a diverse range of international cases covering cultural, natural and mixed World Heritage sites, in both the developed and the developing world, examines the ways in which sites have been inscribed on the World Heritage List and what this has meant in terms of tourism relating to practical issues of management, carrying capacity and the experiences of tourists and local communities. It also looks at the way 'being on the List' shapes, and is shaped by, shifting values and politics at the macro and micro levels.

## A Wilderness Approach under the World Heritage Convention

**Article in Conservation Letters, journal of the Society for Conservation Biology, November 2015**  
**Cyril F. Kormos et al.**  
English only  
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com>

The World Heritage Convention could make a bigger and more systematic contribution to global wilderness conservation by ensuring that the World Heritage List includes full coverage of Earth's wilderness areas with Outstanding Universal Value and by more effectively protecting the ecological integrity of existing World Heritage sites.

## Heritage and Human Rights: A participation and gender-based analysis of the work carried out by the United Nations in the field of cultural heritage

**UNESCO Extea – UNESCO Basque Country Centre Working Papers No. 2**  
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**First thematic expert consultation meeting on sustainable management of the World Heritage properties of religious interest, focused on Mediterranean and South-Eastern Europe.**

UNESCO Headquarters, Paris.

Information: [a.sidorenko@unesco.org](mailto:a.sidorenko@unesco.org)

## 3 to 4 March

**Meeting of the evaluation body of the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Heritage.**

UNESCO Headquarters, Paris.

Information: [r.samadov@unesco.org](mailto:r.samadov@unesco.org)

## 28 April to 4 May

**Regional Youth Forum for World Heritage in Africa.**

Robben Island, South Africa.

Information: [c.quin@unesco.org](mailto:c.quin@unesco.org)

## 1 to 31 May

**African World Heritage: conservation and development.**

Exhibition at UNESCO Headquarters, Paris.

Information: [e.moukala@unesco.org](mailto:e.moukala@unesco.org)

## 10 to 20 July

**40th session of the World Heritage Committee.**

Istanbul, Turkey.

Information: [r.veillon@unesco.org](mailto:r.veillon@unesco.org)

## 1 to 10 September

**IUCN World Conservation Congress 2016: Planet at the Crossroads.**

Hawaii, USA.

Information: [gjuditta.andreaus@iucn.org](mailto:gjuditta.andreaus@iucn.org)



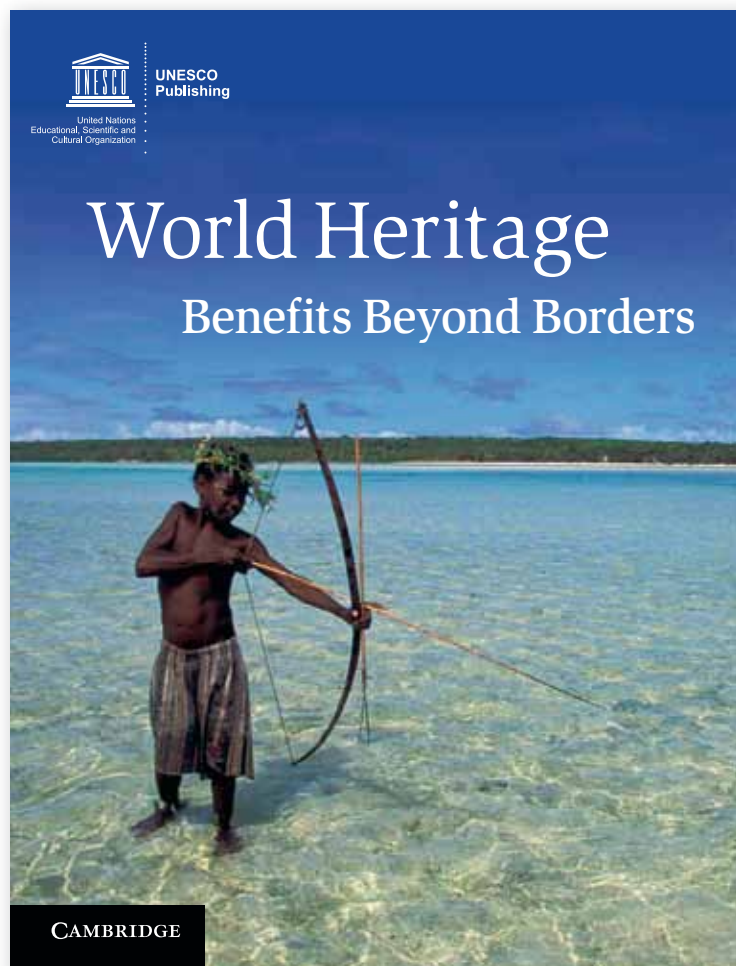
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## Dear supporter of World Heritage,

*World Heritage* magazine is published jointly by UNESCO and Publishing for Development and printed four times a year in English, French and Spanish. The publication presents and promotes the preservation of our World Heritage, with detailed feature articles and news items about the most outstanding cultural and natural sites around the world. This magazine is particularly designed to reflect and enhance UNESCO's dedication to World Heritage sites; our legacy from the past, our responsibility for the present and our duty to future generations.

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# 5th anniversary of Serra de Tramuntana's inscription as a World Heritage Site

In June 2016 it will be five years since a listing that filled so many Majorcans with pride, when UNESCO recognized the Serra de Tramuntana as a UNESCO World Heritage site. It comprises 90 km of cultural landscape recalling humanity's good stewardship of nature for centuries.

Man's imprint on the idyllic landscape of the Serra has been exemplary. Step by step and stone by stone, over time the range has assimilated new values that come from respectful treatment of the Serra. A clear example is the large number of terraces to be found. Farmers needed to farm land that was difficult to access, and decided to terrace the soil in order to have flat areas they could farm. The Serra de Tramuntana terraces could occupy up to 200 km<sup>2</sup>. In addition they are a fabulous ethnological landscape.

The imprint of humanity, throughout history, is also apparent in the water systems created to catch the water in an area where rainy seasons are scarce. In addition, storage systems were built such as coal houses and snow houses. It is also worth noting the dry stone route, forming a network of cobbled paths that allows one to trek along paths built stone by stone.

Listing of the Serra de Tramuntana as a UNESCO World Heritage site was accompanied by the approval of a Management Plan designed to manage

this listing in the same way that the Serra has been managed for centuries. Combining nature and humanity's actions from conservation values and sign of identity.

Yet the Serra has also been a place of residence for internationally famous people. One of the people who have done the most for this emblematic site is Archduke Luis Salvador, a member of the Habsburg dynasty, who made Majorca his home and became one of the pioneers promoting the island's tourism.

Others have also spent time in one village or another of Serra de Tramuntana, such as the composer Frederic Chopin with his beloved George Sand, and British author Robert Graves, who made Deià his home until his death. From the Majorca Council we want to promote Serra de Tramuntana as a tourist destination. But at all times a sustainable type of tourism that respects nature and the values of the site's World Heritage listing.

So, if you have not yet had the opportunity to enjoy the landscape of Serra de Tramuntana, we urge you to visit this wonderful island of Majorca and pay a visit to any of the corners that the island's World Heritage has to offer.





Hawaii Volcanoes National Park (United States).

© Sean Munson

### In Focus: Planet at the Crossroads


Conservation and sustainability are ongoing challenges for World Heritage sites, and the World Heritage Centre has worked closely on these themes with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), an Advisory Body for the World Heritage Convention.

In preparation for the World Conservation Congress, IUCN's international gathering of nature experts to be held in Hawaii (United States) from 1 to 10 September 2016, *World Heritage* will look at sustainable development and conservation issues at



Papahānaumokuākea (United States).

© Greg McFall/NOAA, 2011

various sites, and will present the two Hawaiian World Heritage sites, Papahānaumokuākea and Hawaii Volcanoes National Park. The issue will also feature an interview with Aroha Mead, Chair of IUCN's Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy. 



Concello de Lugo



15TH ANNIVERSARY  
OF THE INSCRIPTION OF  
THE ROMAN WALLS OF  
LUGO ON THE WORLD  
HERITAGE LIST

# Come; it's Lugo

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At the end of the 3rd century BC, dozens of open cities of the Roman Empire began to fear the possibility of peasant revolts and the so-called barbarian peoples, and chose to protect themselves within walls. The walls surrounding Lugo –Lucus Augusti– stretch for two kilometres and have 85 large towers.

During the 19th and early 20th centuries, blind worship of progress resulted in complete or partial demolition of all roman walls in Europe.

There were also some who wanted to demolish the walls in Lugo on the pretext that they were hampering the city's development. Yet local and staunch intellectuals prevented this from happening and in 1921 managed to get the walls listed as national heritage: the ancient walls were saved from dynamite and urban speculation.

In the year 2000, the Roman Walls of Lugo site was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Awareness of its unique spread across the globe, making Lugo a key cultural tourism destination that undoubtedly has contributed to its prosperity.

The ancient Roman Walls, the only ones in the territory of the Empire that preserve their entire circumference, surround a beautiful old baroque and liberal medieval city, with its magnificent Romanesque cathedral, gothic churches of Saint Peter and Saint Dominic, Baroque City Hall... Beautiful streets and bustling squares within the walls, temples, mansions and other archaeological remains open to the public, the surrounding modern city, River Miño with its bridge and Roman baths: Lugo, a walled city, is one of Europe's great centres of Roman history.