

achieved either through preventive or remedial conservation interventions intended to remove or mitigate the causes of deterioration. In so doing, conservation directly impacts the ways in which heritage may be interpreted through its study and display, and how it is made accessible to the public. In particular, this can have a direct impact on the appearance and visual legibility of sites, which in turn can condition perceptions of authenticity.

Archaeological sites

Archaeological sites which have been excavated are usually backfilled for preservation. Structural components which are difficult to conserve in their original, unearthened state when using the backfilling method, such as pillar bases and platform exteriors made of tuff, are subjected to preservation treatment after removal from the site. However, the ideal situation would be to preserve the excavation site as is, with the entire site exposed, without backfilling or removing site components (ACCU Nara, 2009, p. 1).

During excavations, certain measures are necessary in order to record and preserve the site. In addition to documenting the current condition of the site as a preliminary step, investigations of the material and structure of unearthened artefacts and remains yield important information for determining its archaeological nature. An environmental survey is also necessary to establish the geographical context of the site in addition to its state of preservation. A conservation plan will be required with specific priorities for fragile areas. The conservation of archaeological resources also requires an understanding and investigation into post-occupation processes or uses.

The site or parts of the sites might also require the installation of protective structures, such as a roof or cover, to eliminate elements which might lead to the weathering or eroding of the archaeological remains.

Diverse conservation methods are employed at archaeological sites, which include protective sheltering, stabilization measures, reconstruction or even reburial - each of which in its own way will affect the way in which the archaeological information is preserved and perceived. In addition, according to ICOMOS, those elements that are a contiguous part of architectural structures come under the specific provisions of the 1964 *Venice Charter on the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites*, and must therefore be handled accordingly (ICOMOS, 1990). It is also worth noting that generally the majority of archaeological conservation interventions are primarily concerned with issues of presentation - such as structural integration and visual legibility - rather than the material preservation of the site or object (Matero, 2008).

Objects from archaeological excavation

Before archaeologically-recovered artefacts are subjected to conservation treatment, it is important to carry out thorough investigations.