

In non-western societies, places such as Angkor, Great Zimbabwe or Machu Picchu survived and were protected because of their religious values. In many western societies the aesthetic, historical and scientific values have been given greater significance. However, in other parts of the world, social and associative cultural values have a far greater significance, hence the need to manage and protect.

As pointed out by Willems (2010), within heritage management there has been a clear progression since the 1980s towards “contextualizing heritage” within the wider historic environment – in other words, viewing individual sites and monuments as part of a larger whole. This has brought about a key paradigm shift in heritage resource management such that its objective focus has become “the sustainability of that larger whole, rather than the conservation of individual monuments or sites” (Willems, 2010, p. 216). Thus, the relationship between archaeological resources and other heritage manifestations, such as natural components, also becomes a key issue in ensuring conservation and protection.

This shift is notably articulated by the Council of Europe in the 1992 *European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage* (Council of Europe, 1992), and represents a major development in modern approaches to heritage management, by incorporating it within the spatial planning process (Willems, 2010). Earlier efforts had been achieved with the proclamation of the Charters of Athens (1931) and Venice (1964). The aim was to incorporate discipline and ethics into the way excavations and conservation were carried out. The Venice Charter of 1964 – although mainly directed at architectural monuments – also made pronouncements on the conservation of archaeological remains. The emphasis was on minimum intervention.

Recently, due to globalization and the realization that other societies do appreciate and value archaeological remains and objects, there have been new developments such as the Burra Charter (1979), which takes into consideration the specific context of Australia. The Nara Document on Authenticity (1994), on the other hand, recognizes the experience of Japan in managing its heritage properties.

Conservation of archaeological resources

Most of the major issues in the conservation of archaeological resources are due to deterioration of the materials which make up the archaeological asset. The sources of deterioration encompass both environmental and man-made causes. While artefacts may deteriorate due to natural processes, human factors such as neglect, vandalism, over use and poor management, all play a role as well as inappropriate past treatments and lack of maintenance.

A primary objective of conservation is to protect archaeological heritage from material loss and damage and to preserve its values. This is