Nablus Old Town and Tell Rumeida, Hebron.

Mission report to the Palestinian Territories 5-13 May 2004

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Contents.

Purpose of Mission.

By Decision 26 COM 6.1 of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee at the 26th session in Budapest, June 2002, the Committee has invited the UNESCO Director-General to assist the responsible authorities with the task of assessing the state of conservation and the measures for the preservation of the cultural and natural heritage of the Palestinian Territories.

Furthermore, the World Heritage Committee requested the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies by Decision 27 COM 5.2 taken at the 27th session in Paris, July 2003, to carry out a mission to the archaeological site of Tell Rumeida in the Palestinian Territories to examine its state of conservation.

In compliance with these decisions, the World Heritage Centre has organised a technical mission to the Old Town of Nablus and Tell Rumeida in Hebron in order to assess the state of conservation of these specific sites and to submit a report to the World Heritage Committee at the 28th session to be held in Suzhou, China, 28June - 7 July 2004.

The full text of decisions 26 COM 6.1 and 6.2 as well as 27 COM 5.2 is attached in **Annex I**.

The mission was carried out from 5 to13 May 2004 by Dr. Flemming Aalund (Denmark). All meetings and site visits have been facilitated by Giovanni Fontana Antonelli, Programme Specialist in Cultural Heritage, and Constanza Farina, Head of Office, UNESCO Office in Ramallah

The itinerary and meetings during the mission was arranged to provide a first hand impression of the situation in Nablus and Tell Rumeida through direct observations and collection of relevant documentation.

The Terms of Reference is attached in **Annex III**, and a record of the mission program is outlined in **Annex IV**.

The main conclusions are presented under the separate headings for Nablus and Tell Rumeida respectively, including reference to the main sources of information. Full documentation is available at the respective local institutions and at UNESCO Office Ramallah. A range of supplementary information can be obtained from the Internet.

Executive Summery

The mission to the Palestinian Territories is carried out i) in compliance with the decision taken at the 27th session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee requesting the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to examine the state of conservation of the archaeological property of Tell Rumeida in the Palestine Territories, and ii) in consequence of the decisions taken at the 26th session concerning the protection of the cultural heritage in the Palestinian Territories, as well as further to the correspondence concerning the endangered cultural heritage in the Historic Centre of Nablus, the task includes a review of the state of conservation of this site.

Both the Old Town of Nablus and the archaeological site of Tell Rumeida within the Historic Hebron are considered to have exceptional universal value representing significant stages in human history. The

current conflict is creating an imminent threat to this heritage and poses an obstacle for ensuring a lasting and sustainable preservation of cultural heritage as an integrated part of the daily life of the community. The situation is a complex one, which needs to be considered at overall and detail levels, beyond the scope of this technical report.

Nablus Old Town

The situation in Nablus has become specifically critical after the military operations by the Israeli Defence Forces in March-April 2002. A working group of states parties to the WH Convention drafted a resolution for submission to the World Heritage Committee expressing 'grave concern for the continuing loss of all innocent lives and at the destruction and damage caused to the cultural heritage in the Palestinian Territories'[1]. The draft resolution further urged Israel 'to ensure the protection of all heritage in the Palestinian Territories in its multicultural diversity'.

After a first hand review of the situation on site and having studied all relevant documents provided, my impression corroborates the previous assessments of damage that occurred in April 2002, as well as of subsequent destruction carried out in December 2003-January 2004.

Based on a quantitative assessment of damage carried out by a task force group[2], the total cost of repair in the Old Town alone has tentatively been estimated at the scale of 33.2 mill USD with a great margin of uncertainty due to the complex character of the damage. Structural problems caused by shelling and explosions in particular may have a long term effect and cannot be easily verified.

Some 64 historic buildings or groups of buildings have been severely damaged in 2002, of which 4 buildings were completely ruined. These sites are now turned into heaps of rubble or cleared away, creating empty and dusty scars in the historic townscape.

The latest incursion in 2003-2004 inflicted damage especially in the Qarioun District of the Old Town, resulting in the complete destruction of 3 residential houses and another 35 buildings rendered uninhabitable.

Already preceding periods of unrest and political instability have caused neglect and mistreatment of the historic fabric. The departure of the more affluent part of the population has drained the economic and social resources of the community during long periods of time. Shared ownership to property poses a specific problem, and as a result 10-20 % of the building stock is considered in bad condition.

During the intermediate two years since the first incursion in 2002 the Municipal Council has succeeded to make a considerable amount of repair to individual buildings and to the infrastructure of the Old Town in spite of difficulties and constraints imposed by the security situation and limitations of free movement of the inhabitants.
The emergency repair work has been facilitated by funding provided by the Japanese and the Norwegian

[1] UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, Report of the Rapporteur, April 2002, pp.61-62, available at: http://whc.unesco.org/archive/repbur02.htm#sec16

[2] The Task Force Group composed of technicians from Nablus Municipality, An-Najah National University, UNDP, Palestinian Association of Engineers and Palestinian Contractors Union; cf.: Report prepared by An-Najah National University, Earth Sciences and Seismic Engineering Center, *Post-Disaster Damage Assessment for the City of Nablus*, May 2002.

Governments amounting to a total of 4.5 mill USD. The repair is not in all cases up to the international standards of restoration. Much can be excused due to the emergency situation in which safety cannot be compromised and humanitarian concerns have first priority.

The humanitarian and practical problems are draining the already limited resources and the technical staff of the municipality has limited experience in restoration work and lack professional expertise to deal with it. Under the present circumstances, it is not realistic in the short term to ensure a sustainable preservation of the Old Town.

Tell Rumeida, Hebron

Ever since Tell Rumeida was identified as the ancient Hebron in the 1920s the universal significance of the archaeological site has been internationally acknowledged for the evidence of early pre-historic settlements and as a testimony of continuos occupation for about 5.000 years up to the present. The site has an exceptional importance for Biblical history and early Christianity before the settlement was finally abandoned and moved down the hill to the present location of the Old Town. The Ibrahim Mosque with the Tombs of the Patriarchs is now the major landmark of Hebron venerated by Jews as well as by Muslims.

The exceptional symbolic significance of Hebron has created the special feeling about the place, which over long periods of time has strained the very tense relations between the different groups, expecting special privileges and claiming a prerogative to a site, which otherwise is representing universal multicultural values. Emotional involvement is being allowed to take the lead and enforcement of civil order is obviously not easy. We are perhaps at the very heart of the reasoning behind the formulation of the World Heritage Convention in 1972.

World Heritage is a fragile and non-renewable, irreplaceable resource to mankind as a whole. The aim of safeguarding World Heritage Sites is to maintain their authenticity and their cultural values. This is not only confined to the historic site alone, but includes the surrounding cultural landscape, which has matured as a result of a harmonious interaction between nature and human intervention.

In default of relevant urban and regional planning systems and adequate regimes of enforcement the concept of cultural landscape has not previously been considered. Special concern should therefore be directed towards the restitution and preservation of the associative cultural landscape in Hebron [3].

It is obvious that the urban encroachment on the hill of Tell Rumeida has been allowed to take place for a number of years and several residential houses have been constructed within the area, which is part of the archaeologically important zone. More recent, an Israeli settlement has occupied parts of the excavated site since 1984 in violation of established standards for preservation of archaeological sites. This situation has been further aggravated by the recent construction of a four story apartment block on top of archaeological remains of the acropolis.

Further irreversible damage to the cultural heritage of Hebron can be envisaged, if the current plan for a new roadcut through historic quarters is being realised in violation of the Revitalisation of Hebron Old Town Project (1999-2001), funded mainly by the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida)

[3] Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, para. 39 (iii)

and implemented by the Hebron Rehabilitation Committee in co-operation with Riwaq Centre for Architectural Conservation.

The land use plan prepared by the Revitalisation of Hebron Old Town Project in 2001 provides an appropriate strategy for the future development of an archaeological park at Tell Rumeida. This will help preserve this important multicultural historical site by securing the possibilities of future research, making the place accessible to the general public. This plan will require that all buildings within the boundary of the site are being registered and there future status defined for possible removal. At the same time the plan is intending to provide public amenities in the immediate vicinity of residential quarters. This is a positive vision and a basis for a sustainable development of a striving community. A further detailing of the plan will involve the formulation of a Management Plan and creation of appropriate buffer zones.

I The Old Town of Nablus.

Overview

The incursion of the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) on 3-21 April 2002, which took place within the context of the 2nd Intifada started in 2000, inflicted considerable damaged to the historic fabric of the Old Town of Nablus as well as to the city infrastructure. During the incursions the Palestinian population was placed under prolonged curfew resulting in severe human sufferings. According to local sources hundred of residents were injured and eight people killed under the debris of demolished buildings.

A new military operation was launched into the city on 15th December 2003 lasting up to the 6 January 2004, resulting in casualties involving the death of six people. According to the IDF, this was a continuation of its use of 'all legal means in order to strike at terrorists, their dispatchers, and those who assist them'. The general humanitarian consequences of this last incursion are outlined in a report prepared by United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs [4].

Further to this destruction, the Dead Sea Earthquake of 11 February 2004 also hit Nablus Old Town, aggravating the structural instability of buildings.

In consequence of the continued presence of the Israeli Defence Forces and the damage inflicted on the historic buildings in combination with the curfews and restrictions of free movements, the socio-economic life of the city is further deteriorating. Individual families are suffering psychologically and economically from loss of property and the humanitarian problems are further increasing with a reported unimployment rate of about 60 %.

Damage assessment.

A first damage assessment was carried out in early April 2002 to assist Nablus municipal authorities and Local Government efforts to cope with the emergency resulting from militiray incursions. The Damage Assessment Team for Nablus and Salfit was composed of a donor convened team of experts supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Germany and Japan assisted by engineers from the Palestinian Engineers Association, An-Najah University and the Palestinian Contractors Union [5] .

The total estimated repair and replacement cost within the City of Nablus - old and new - was estimated at a total of 85.4 mill USD for infrastructure, incorporating damage to water and wastewater installations, electricity supply installations, removal of debris, buildings and roads[6]. This amount does

[4] *Initial Report: Humanitarian Consequences of the IDF Operation in the Old City of Nablus 26 December 3003- 6 January 2004;* United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; www.reliefweb.int/hic-opt

[5] See previous note 2 concerning a Report by Earth Sciences and Seismic Engineering Center, An-Najah National University, *Post-Disaster Damage Assessment for the City of Nablus*, May 2002. Information about the International Support Group can be consulted at <www.support-group.org>

[6] according to information obtainable at:
< www.support-group.org/DAM%20Nablus/NAB%20Damage%20Assessment %20Report.htm

not include indirect losses and damage inflicted at nineteen villages in the district as well as to the three refugee camps in the vicinity: Balata, Askar, and E'in Beit Elma. Damage to NGO projects was reported separately. Likewise a separate assessment of institutional damage was executed by the EC and the World Bank.

Replacement cost of buildings and pavements within the Old Town was estimated at the level of 33.2 mill USD. Total cost, including 25% contigencies, amount to 41.5 mill USD according to detailled specifications in the report presented by An-Najah National University.

During the military operations into the Old Town the Israeli Defense Forces have repeatedly used explosives to blast holes in the stone masonry to get easy access to the interiors. This violation of the historic fabric is not only creating holes destroying the ancient stone masonry, but effects the structural stability of the whole house, and the neighbouring buildings, which are further affected by intrusion into the Old Town by heavy military vehicles, tanks and bulldozers. These type of damage to stone masonry might not be visible at a first glance, but will have a long term effect on the structural stability of buildings.

The exact extend of damage is also difficult to assess in a state of chaos and immediate disorder. Prices are based on unit costs, with contingencies added at the rate of 25 %. Inflation rate is high and restoration work on historic buildings cannot be easily evaluated and replacement cost of historic buildings cannot include irreplaceable heritage value. Figures attaining to the actual spending has not been obtained from the Municipality.

Irreplacable damage to historic buildings

The damage resulting from April 2002 is spread all over the Old Town ranging from casual damage such as fallen plaster, broken windows and doors, to severe damage affecting the structural stability of buildings, including total collapse and destruction. The field investigations used the system for damage evaluation adopted in The European Macro Seismic Scale divided into five categories, the worst being:

Grade 3: Substantial to heavy damage (moderate structural, heavy non-structural damage)

Grade 4: Very heavy damage (havy structural, very heavy non-structural damage)

Grade 5: Destruction (total or near total collapse).

Some 64 buildings or groups of buildings are estimated to have been completely destroyed or partially damaged, with damages classified according to categories 3, 4 and 5. A visual perception of the range of damage according to grade 3, 4 and 5 is shown in Fig A.

Two residential houses were completely destroyed resulting in human casualties:

- Al-Shu'bi House, residential house. Total destruction and the family of eight people died under the debris.
- Hosh Freitekh, residential house. Total destruction and two people died.

Some other 17 damaged buildings are listed as historic buildings with specific architectural value, and therefore considered part of irreplaceable cultural heritage (the reference numbers in brackets refer to

the inventory prepared by Graz University including a total number of 100 historic building [7]:

- Al-Nabulsi Soap Factory (Sabanet Al-Nabulsi), grade 5, total destruction (no. 85)
- Al-Kan'an Soap Factury (Sabanet Kan'an) grade 5, total destruction (no. 97)
- Saint Dimitrious Church, grade 4 (nr. 7)
- Abdelhadi House (Dar Abdelhadi-AlShaikh Maher House) grade 3 (no. 37)
- Masri Palace (Dar Al-Masri), grade 3 (no. 22)
- Kanaan Soap Factory (Sabanet Kanaan), grade 3 (no 38)
- Nabulsi Palace (Kasr Al-Nabulsi) grade 4-5 (no. 39)
- Abdelhadi Palace I (Kasr Abdelhadi Al-Awal), grade 3 (no. 42)
- Tuqqan Palace (Kasr Tuqqan), grade 3 (no. 44)
- Tuqqan Palace (Dar Tuqqan), grade 3 (no. 47)
- New Bath House (Al-Hammam Al-Shifah), grade 3 (no. 48)
- Tamimi Bath House (Hammam Al-Tamimi), grade 3 (no. 64)
- Old Saray (Al-Saraya Al-Kadimeh), grade 3 (no.69)
- Al-Rantisi Soap Factory (Sabanet Al-Rantisi) grade 3 (no.84)
- Al-Khammash Soap Factory (Sabanet Al-Khammah), grade 3 (no.90)
- Abu-Alrus Soap Factory (Sabanet Abu-Alrus), grade 3 (no. 91)
- Dar Ashur, residential house, grade 3 (no. 100)

More damage was inflicted upon the historic buildings in December 2003, including the listed Abdelhadi Palace, which was hit by mortars fired from a tank followed by a number of internal explosions intended to break through masonry walls in order to get access to the interior. Further destruction was made to a number of inhabited buildings in the neighbouring historic quarter of the Qarioun District: 3 houses were destroyed and the families lost their belongings; 35 houses were rendered temporarily uninhabitable; 10 houses were partially damaged and tens of houses had their windows blown out [8]

International concern and international emergency assistance.

There are two principal international treaties dealing with cultural heritage in the built environment, the *Convention concerning the protection of cultural heritage in event of armed conflict* (1954), called the Hague Convention, and its Second Protocol of 1999, which focuses on the protection of historic monuments in times of armed conflict, and the *Convention concerning the protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage* (1972). Both these conventions have an appeal to the international community and stipulate a direct responsibility of the States Parties to the Conventions.

[7] *Masterplan for the Preservation and further development of the historic Centre of Nablus*, Graz University of Technology in-co-operation with International City Forum Graz and Nablus Municipality, funded by Austrian Development Co-operation, 2003

[8] Documentation including photographic records provided by Department of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage

Concern for the cultural heritage in the Palestinian Territories has been voiced by UNESCO at several occasions and has resulted in two subsequent statements by the World Heritage Committee in 2002 and 2003 respectively. This concern is expressed by the Director General in press releases dating 3th June 2002 and 10th March 2004. In the later the Director-General expresses his intention to frame a comprehensive preservation strategy for Palestinian cultural heritage[9].

At the General Conference in Madrid November 2002 The International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) assented to a Resolution no. 18 jointly proposed by the National Committee of Israel, the Palestinian Observer Committee and the National Committees of Greece and Canada concerning the destruction of cultural heritage in the Palestine Territories[10]. The Resolution expresses e.g. great concern with the ongoing destruction and constant threat to cultural heritage in Israel and the Palestine Territories and calls upon all parties to take positive action to respect international agreements (see Annex II).

The Government of Norway supported a labour intensive rehabilitation project centred on rehabilitation of the Old Town as an immediate response to the social situation created after April 2002 at a total budget of 2.8 mill. USD. Also the Government of Japan has responded positively to a request by the Municipality of Nablus for international assistance amounting to 1.4 mill USD.

These funds have been spent on emergency repairs and additional appeals are being issued for obtaining further support to job creation initiatives aiming at restoration of residential houses. The EU has allocated 2.5 mill Euros for a rehabilitation project of the Wekalah Bazaar (Khan Al-Wukala Al-Faroukiah) with technical support of UNESCO. Also The World Heritage Committee is contributing by allocating 150.000 USD from the Emergency Reserve of the World Heritage Fund, to assist with the preservation of cultural and natural heritage in the Palestinian Territories.

Furthermore the UNESCO Executive Board responded to the need of emergency resonstruction within the old fabric by securing 60.000 USD Carry-over Funds for the restoration of two historical buildings in Nablus (House al-Shobi and House Fritekh).

Summery of findings and observations

The safety of the civil population cannot be compromised by concern for the preservation of historic buildings. First priority of the Municipality has been directed towards clearance of unsafe building structures and providing assistance to people, who are suffering from damages affecting their property and family homes.

A majority of the small and medium scale damage to individual buildings, that occurred during the first incursion in April 2002 have been repaired by the Municipality through a major emergency work campaign mobilizing combined municipal resources and volunteer work in order to avoid further casualties from unsafe building structures and bring relief to people, who were made homeless or lost private property.

Direct economic assistance to the Nablus Municipality provided by the Japanese and Norwegian Governments have helped provide for the immediate humanitarian needs and to accomplish most urgent

[9] <www.unesco.org>

[10] <www.international.icomos.org/madrid2002/eng/resol_eng.htm>

repair work to the historic buildings, which were otherwise creating imminent risk of further human losses.

In these cases there is a need for new infill or alternatively creation of open public space or green areas, which are compatible with the historic environment.

Restoration proper according to international standards are not a first priority and profound understanding of the needs for heritage preservation is limited during political turbulence lasting for long periods of time. Under such desperate conditions repair has been carried out without proper documentation and often lack specific care for historic details. The extensive use of cement in mortars and plasters will inevitably pose a problem in the future, and its use should be banned immediately in all restoration work, if not required for strictly structural purposes. Preservation and restoration of historic buildings and monuments is anyhow a fairly new professional discipline in the Palestinian Territories, and neither the means nor the capacity is adequate to the needs.

The recent damage to the cultural heritage follows a long chain of events causing destruction and neglect of Palestinian heritage. Without going into details about a variety of reasons the study of Old Nablus carried out by Graz University of Technology in 1997[11] indicates that buildings considered in 'bad condition'constitute as much as 10-20% of the total physical fabric. The same survey also estimates that about the same percentage of buildings have lost integrity and authenticity. The extended family pattern and subsequent shared ownership to property, often including many owners, who have immigrated, give reason to further neglect and subsequent deterioration of heritage values. As a result many of the 100 buildings listed in the inventory of the architectural heritage of Old Nablus remain vacant, misused or occupied by poor families, who cannot afford the upkeep.

However, the damage inflicted upon the Old Town has created a distinct awareness of cultural heritage and the understanding of the needs for its preservation is increasing within the community.

The rich and diversified cultural heritage in the Old Town of Nablus has resulted in the inclusion of the historic town in the provisional Tentative List for possible inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage List. The *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (draft edition July 2002) stipulates the formal obligations to undertake the appropriate legal, scientific, technical, administrative and financial measures for the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and rehabilitation of this heritage.

From the standpoint of urban planning legislation, the Convention is even more specific, establishing a formal obligation to adopt a general policy, which aims to give the cultural and natural heritage a function in the life of the community and to integrate the protection of that heritage into comprehensive planning programmes. In the case of a living historic town like Nablus the problems are multiple. Under these circumstances priorities are often subject to discussion between concerned stakeholders, who may have contradicting interests.

These difficulties are especially dealt with in the Operational Guidelines (art. 29-34), emphasising that inclusion in the List implies that legislative and administrative steps have been taken to ensure the protection of the site and that the inhabitants are made fully aware about the importance of the cultural heritage.

The reorganised Department of Archaeology and Cultural Heritage has a new and enlarged scope of work. Additional to the traditional protection of archaeological remains the new duties include protection of cultural heritage as an integrated part of a living society. This is a new challenge and the

[11] Refer note 7

management structure and division of responsibilities need to be reviewed and strengthened to address the coordination of heritage preservation and urban development strategies. Likewise, at the local level, the Old Town Unit within Nablus Municipality, is hardly geared to undertake the comprehensive obligations stipulated in the World Heritage Convention.

The legislative basis for the protection of cultural heritage in the Palestinian Territories of the West Bank is still relying on Jordanian law, if the area in question is not under military control. A new draft legislation is under preparation, but still pending.

Numerous articles and reports about the history of Nablus allow a general and rich appreciation of the historic environment. Different inventories are prepared by the Municipality, The Dept. of Archaeology and Cultural Heritage and by Riwaq, Centre for Architectural Conservation, but no coordination is ensured. Systematic recording and documentation is much needed. If published individual owners can appreciate the special historic values and architectural qualities of his own property in relation to the larger historical townscape.

Recommendations

Several initiatives have already been taken in this direction emphasising the need to improve the legal, administrative and practical management of the Old Town of Nablus. The Graz University study of 2003 outlines the modalities for the creation of a special Steering Committee for the Old Town. Also the Centre for Urban and Regional Planning together with the Department of Architecture at An-Najah National University have drafted a proposal for establishing an Old Nablus Rehabilitation Committee in May this year. Arrangements in other cities, such as the Old City of Jerusalem Revitalization Program[12] and the Hebron Old Town Project [13] are providing valuable experience and exsamples of 'best practice' relevant for Nablus.

The need for improvement of shelter and provision of housing for a large number of deprived people is part of the problem of creating a sustainable development and preservation policy.

A constructive approach could be that the Municipal Council convene a meeting for a thorough discussion of the aims and modalities, inviting stakeholder representatives from the city of Nablus and elsewhere in spite of the current restrictions of free movements between cities.

A work plan could possible imply the following steps :

- Form a committee responsible for the integrated development and preservation of the Old Town with representatives of all concerned stakeholders and with a clear mandate vis-à-vis the Municipality and the Local Governorate.
- Set up an Old Town Preservation Office by merging the existing Old Town Unit of the Municipality of Nablus and the Nablus Office of the Department of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage and define new modalities for the technical and administrative responsibilities and duties.

[12] - *Turath,* The quarterly newsletter devoted to the preservtion of architectural heritage produced by the Old City of Jerusalem Revitalization Program (OCJRP) and published by the Welfare Association.

- *Jerusalem, Heritage and Life, The Old City Revitalization Plan 2004*, Welfare Association.

[13] - Revitalization of Hebron Old Town Project 1999-2001, Hebron Rehabilitation Committee.

- Designate the Old Town as a separate preservation zone and define the boundaries.
- Start the process of formulating a Management Plan, including by-laws and development regulations. Considering the complex nature of a living city, the plan should not be restricted to deal with the physical structure, but also address the socio-economic life of the city and its interdependence of the surrounding modern suburbs.

It may be one of the first duties of the new Committee to formulate a clearly stated policy for the future development of the Old Town. Nablus Municipality is encouraged to establish development goals and plan for the work necessary and relevant to its possible World Heritage status and submit the action planning as an application for additional external funding.

Such initiatives will only have long term sustainability, when further destruction of cultural heritage come to a stop. The rules and moral obligations stipulated in the Second Protocol to the Hague Convention of 1999 for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict have specific relevance. UNESCO may accord assistance for actions essential to safeguard cultural property and can make proposals on these matters to the parties in the conflict. The option of granting enhanced protection of cultural heritage is but one to be explored.

II Tell Rumeida.

Overview

Tell Rumeida at Hebron is also named Tel Hebron in the archaeological literature[14] and identified as the ancient Hebron (*el-Khalil)*. The acropolis at the top of the hill was investigated and partly excavated by professor Philip C. Hammond in 1964-1966. The dig has revealed successive occupational layers dating back to Chalcolithic times 3500 B.C. The site was apparently abandoned after the Roman period. Subsequent excavation was carried out in 1999 by Immanuel Eisenberg, and there is no doubt about the unique archaeological importance of the site

The excavated part of the acropolis is located at the top of Mount Rumeideh overlooking the wadi below, where subsequent urban development took place. The Old Town of Hebron is composed of densely built up tissue of stone buildings in the Old Town is intersected by partly covered streets and lanes have previously formed a vital economic and social entity, which was the only urban centre in the southern Judaean hills and the virtual capital and commercial centre. The Ibrahim Mosque (Al Haram ash-Sahrif), containing the tomb of the Patriarchs, is the main historic landmark within the Old Town.

The ancient settlement located at the archaeological site of Tell Rumeida and the Old Town of Hebron are composing a unique cultural heritage resulting from about 5.000 years of continuos occupation up to the present.

The general state of conservation

Due to the historic events Hebron is regarded as a sacred place to Jews and Muslims alike by virtue of the powerful religious and cultural associations represented by religious and cultural heritage. Subsequently, Hebron has been the stage for a series of particularly unpleasant confrontations with tragic consequences.

From a relatively small town with about 10.000 inhabitant by the mid last century, the exodus of the population, that took place subsequent to the 1967-war reduced the population of the Old Town to about only 400 inhabitants in 1996, accelerating a process of neglect and subsequent deterioration of the urban fabric. The unrest and the restrictions imposed on the free movement of the inhabitants, as well as the close down of the commercial area, has resulted in further decay of the Old Town of Hebron, and to-day vehicular traffic is prohibited in the designated security zones, shops are closed down and normal life is suspended.

New urban developments, mainly originating from the last twenty years, take place at the surrounding hills now occupied by a total population of about 140.000 Palestinians. The land has been increasingly in demand for new housing, and encroachment upon the historic sites has been inevitable without proper development plans and enforcement of law.

The encroachment upon the Tell Rumeida has taken place in spite of the protection, which was established already during the British Mandate Period and the protection provided by the subsequent Jordanian Law.

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14 Avi Ofer, 'Tel Hebron', *Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavation in the Holy Land*, vol 2, pp 606-609, 1993.

According to the 1997 Oslo Peace Accord and related documents, Hebron is subject to a double regime of authority dividing the city into zone 'H2' under Israeli military control with a Palestinian population of about 30.000 and surrounded by zone 'H1' under Palestinian sovereignty, if the control is not overruled by military decree and Israel continues to carry the responsibility for overall security of Israelis[15].

Since October 2000 movement restrictions and closure orders have been imposed on H2, halting normal daily life and forcing shopkeepers to close. Due to the increased risks to personal security and property more families have left the area or have decided against moving into the Old Town in spite of the incentives offered.

In an attempt to preserve cultural heritage and control further urban development the Hebron Rehabilitation Committee was established in 1996. The Revitalization of Hebron Old Town Project (1999-2001), implemented by the Hebron Rehabilitation Committee in co-operation with Riwaq Centre for Architectural Conservation, is still receiving external funding from the Islamic Development Bank, The Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, as well as bi-lateral development assistance from Spain, Norway and Sweden. Restoration and rehabilitation of the traditional architecture is well underway, representing but a faint reminiscence of the rich anonymous architecture, which have sadly disappeared elsewhere in the Palestine Territories. The planned roadcut through parts of the historic fabric seems not to be planned in respect of the historic fabric of interconnected houses and may result in further destruction of prodigious architecture .

The Committee received the Agha Khan Award in recognition of an outstanding contribution to preservation of Cultural heritage and Muslim architecture in 1998. However, the tight security control prohibit delivery of building materials by truck, and the work of the Committee is further being restricted in certain areas of the town by military decree.

The general state of conservation of Tell Rumeida.

The delineation of the historic town area is mapped by the Revitalization of Hebron Old Town Project, and the relating Land Use Plan designates Tell Rumeida as an archaeological site and recreational park area, including proposal for creating cultural tourist itineraries (see Fig. B). The Plan has not yet been adopted by the Municipal Council and presented to the Higher Palestinian Council of Zoning and Planning to obtain statutory power.

The extent of Tell Rumeida is very large and the exact boundary of the ancient settlement is not yet explored possibly covering a total of about 7-8 ha of land. Only part of the *acropolis* has been excavated.

Since 1984 part of this excavation area of Tell Rumeida has been occupied by seven settler families of the Gush Emunim and Kach settler movements, who have placed temporary barrack within the archaeological site. Some photographic documentation originating from the recent excavation by Emmanuel Eisenberg is made publicly available at the Internet [16], illustrating the situation in 1999.

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[15] Protocol Concerning the Redeployment in Hebron 18.1.1997.

[16] <www.hebron.org.il>

Overlooking the site from the opposite hill, it also appears that a number of modern, non-Israeli concrete buildings were already then located in the immediate vicinity of the archaeological site. A new housing scheme is planned at the archaeological site in replacement of the temporary barracks. Apparently the plan includes the construction of 6-7 row-houses and a apartment block. What allegedly was first argued to be a shelter intended for the protection of the archaeological site, has turned up to be the very foundation of the four storey apartment building. The case has been subject to scrutiny by the Israeli High Court, who has decided against the plan, but the decision has been overruled and the construction of the apartment block in four stories has been completed with Israeli Government funding.

Admission has not been granted to access the site during the mission and the actual situation could not be verified on site, but at a distance it appears, that a four storey square building structure is actually located at the top of the hill, where the archaeological site is located.

The jurisdiction in the city is stipulated in the 1997 Oslo Accord by dividing the city into different security zones, 'H1' and 'H2'. The previous Jordanian Law is maintained with subsequent modifications imposed by military decree, and in the present volatile situation enforcement of law and order is continuously being disputed due to the 'shared responsibilities' [17].

Conclusion

In conclusion, the place has unique importance as a pre-historic site and to Biblical history and early Christianity, as well as forming an integral part of the cultural landscape of Hebron. According to the information received, the construction of an apartment block on top of the archaeological remains compromise the integrity of the site and has an adverse influence on the future possibilities of presenting this historic site in an intelligible and didactic way to the visitors.

[17] <www.palestinehistory.com/doc06.htm>

Select References:

International Conventions and Declarations.:

_ The Fourth Geneva Convention (1949) and its additional Protocols.

_ The Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (The Hague, 1954) and Second Protocol 1999.

_ The Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972).

_ Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (last update July 2002**)**

_ Draft UNESCO Declaration concerning the International Destruction of Cultural Heritage, presented at the General Conference 32nd session, Paris 2003.

_ The International Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003).

General references:

_ Herb Stovel, *Risk Preparedness: A management manual for World Cultural Heritage*, ICCRO, Rome, 1998.

_ Bernard M. Fielden and Jukka Jokilehto, *Management Guidelines for World Cultural Heritage Sites*, ICCOM, Rome, 1993.

Nablus:

_ 'Nablus, Historic Centre of Nablus - its preservation, adaption and future', *ISG Magazin, Internationales Städteforum Graz*, no. 3, 2001 pp. 1-40.

_ 'The Nablus Project', Graz University of Technology in co-operation with International City Forum Graz, funded by Austrian Development Co-operation, 2003.

Hebron:

_ Nazmi al-Ju'beh, *Hebron (al-Khalil), Continuität und Integrationskraft einer Stadt*, Tübingen Universitet 1991 (unpublished thesis).

_ Ali Ofer, 'Tel Hebron', *Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, vol 2, pp 606-609.

Annex I: Extracts from the World Heritage Committee session 26 and 27.

PROTECTION OF THE CULTURAL HERITAGE IN THE PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES

Documents: WHC-02/CONF.202/3;
WHC-02/CONF.202/INF.16

26 COM 6.1 The World Heritage Committee,

4. Recalling all the United Nations resolutions related to the conflict and in particular Resolutions 1397, 1402 and 1403 of the Security Council of the United Nations, the Resolution 53/27 of the General Assembly on Bethlehem-2000 and the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention (1949) and its additional Protocols;

5. Noting the provisions of the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972), the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (The Hague, 1954) and other relevant international legal instruments;

6. Taking note of the Executive Board decision taken at its 164th session (164EX/3.1.1);

7. Deplores the destruction and damage caused to the cultural heritage of Palestine;

8. Emphasizing the exceptional universal value of cultural heritage in Palestine;

9. Considers that, until the conditions for the inscription of this heritage on the World Heritage List are fulfilled, appropriate measures shall be taken to ensure its protection;

10. Invites the Director-General, in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee, to assist with the task of establishing an inventory of this cultural and natural heritage, assessing state of conservation and the measures for its preservation and rehabilitation;

11. Further decides to provide financial support for the implementation of this task and that part of this contribution should be used for training and capacity building of Palestinians specialists in the field of preservation and safeguarding of cultural and natural heritage;

12. Appeals to the concerned parties to co-operate with the Director-General in his efforts in the protection of the cultural and natural heritage in Palestine;

13. Invites the Director-General to report on the execution of this decision during the 27th session of the Committee in 2003.

26 COM 6.2 The World Heritage Committee,

Requests the Director-General, as a consequence of decision **26 COM 6.1**, to seek additional resources to complement the contribution from the World Heritage Fund, with a view to launching the first phase of the plan of action before the end of 2002, and to strengthen its operational phase in the following year.[3]

26 COM 6.3 The World Heritage Committee,

Takes note of the declarations made by the Observers of Palestine and Israel after the adoption of decisions **26 COM 6.1** and **26 COM 6.2** and decides to include them *in extenso* in the Summary Records.

***

Implementation of the Decision 26 COM 6.1, 26 COM 6.2 and 26 COM 24.2.5, concerning the protection of the cultural heritage of the Palestinian Territories
Document: WHC-03/27.COM/INF. 5

27 COM 5.2 The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having taken note of the information concerning the threats to the archaeological property of Tell Rumeida, in the Palestinian Territories;

2. Requests the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to carry out a mission to the property to examine its state of conservation at the earliest possible time, within the scope of Decision **26 COM 6.1** concerning the protection of the cultural heritage in the Palestinian Territories, and submit a report to the World Heritage Committee at its 28th session in 2004;

3. Appeals to all concerned parties to ensure that the cultural and natural heritage of the region is preserved, and that destruction or irreversible damage be avoided.

Annex II: Extract from ICOMOS 13th General Assembly, Madrid 2002;

Resolutions Committee Report

Resolution jointly proposed by the National Committee of Israel, the Palestinian Observer Committee and the National Committees of Greece and Canada.

Reaffirming the spirit of the World Heritage Convention particularly considering that the deterioration or disappearance of any item of the cultural and natural heritage constitutes a harmful impoverishment of the heritage of all the nations of the world and recalling that the existing international conventions, recommendations and resolutions concerning cultural and natural property demonstrate the importance, for all peoples of the world, of safeguarding this unique and irreplaceable property, to whatever people it may belong,

Considering the provisions of the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (1954) and the objectives of the Second Protocol to the Hague Convention (1999),

Recalling the joint UNESCO-ICOMOS Resolution on Information as an instrument for Protection against War Damages to the Cultural Heritage (Sweden 1994),

Reaffirming the right to cultural heritage as an integral part of human rights and the right to have the authentic testimony of cultural heritage as expressed in the ICOMOS declaration marking the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

Regretting the loss of human life as a result of armed conflicts and acts of terrorism, The ICOMOS General Assembly wishes to:

- Express its great concern with the ongoing destruction and constant threat to cultural heritage in Israel and the Palestinian Territories and calls upon all parties to take positive action to respect international agreements,

- Urge all parties to initiate joint actions to protect and promote a rich cultural heritage,

- Offer its support to any request for technical assistance and coordination of activities that may be needed.

Annex III: Terms of Reference.

UNESCO Office Ramallah

Terms of Reference, Dr. Flemming Aalund, UNESCO WHC consultant

1. Background

In compliance with the decision **27 COM 5.2,** requesting the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to carry out a mission to the Tell Rumeida to examine its state of conservation at the earliest possible time, and submit a report to the World Heritage Committee at its 28th session in June/July 2004;
As a response to the request of the Palestinian Delegation to UNESCO to the Chairperson of the World Heritage Committee, by letter dated 6 September 2002, to send a mission to assess the risks threatening the archaeological site of Tel Rumeida, near Hebron, as well as to the correspondence concerning the endangered Cultural Heritage of the Old City of Nablus, the Contractor shall:

undertake a one-week/ten-day mission to the cities of Nablus and Hebron, in the West Bank, Palestinian Territories, in order to review the general state of conservation of the two selected sites. This would involve:

B. Assignment

1. To meet with the responsible Palestinian authorities, such as the Palestinian National Commission, the Department of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage (Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities) in Ramallah, the Municipality of Nablus, the Hebron Rehabilitation Committee and the UNESCO Office Ramallah, in order to receive relevant briefings;

2. To consult the relevant documentation available in-situ and discuss possible preservation measures with the concerned institutional bodies and the UNESCO Office in Ramallah;

3. To visit the Old City of Nablus, in order to assess its state of conservation; particular attention should be paid to the current physical condition of the urban fabric and its main historical buildings, compared with baseline documentation available at the Municipality of Nablus. The assessment should also address issues such as the adequacy of protection measures for the safeguarding of the Cultural Heritage in the Old City, including the existing local capacity on heritage conservation and urban management.

4. To visit the archaeological site of ATel Rumeida@, near Hebron, and assess the factors affecting its state of conservation.

5. To prepare a report on the findings of the mission, in the English language, including an executive summary and operational recommendations, and submit it to UNESCO, together with a certified financial statement on all the incurred expenditures, within four weeks after departure from the Palestinian Territories.

C. Arrangements

Dr. Aalund will be accompanied during the mission by Mr. Giovanni Fontana Antonelli, CLT Programme Specialist at the UNESCO Office Ramallah, who will contribute to the assessment of the selected locations with his technical expertise and knowledge of the Palestinian environment.

Annex IV: Itinerary and mission programme, Palestinian Territories, 5 - 13 May 2004

Wednesday 5 May

Jerusalem

15:00 Arrival at Tel Aviv Airport and transfer to Hotel in Jerusalem
18:30 Briefing with Mr. Giovanni Fontana Antonelli, UNESCO Office Ramallah

Thursday 6 May

Nablus

10:00 Meeting with Dr Hamdan Taha, Director-General, Department of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage, Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities

Meeting with Mr. Ihab Daoud and Mr. Bassam Hebeisheh, architects at the Nablus Office of the Department of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage

11:00 Meeting with Dr. Ali Abdelhamid and Dr. Iman Al Amed, Al-Najah National University, Nablus

PM General Site visit to the Old City of Nablus, accompanied by Mr. Abdul Kalbouneh, Director of the Nablus Office of the Department of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage, as well as the architects Mr. Ihab Daoud and Mr. Bassam Hebeisheh

Friday 7 May

Ramallah

9:00 Meeting with Ms Costanza Farina, Head of Office, UNESCO Ramallah

10:00 Collecting documentation on Tel Rumeida and Nablus
PM Continued working session with Mr. Giovanni Fontana Antonelli, Programme Specialist in CLT at UNESCO Office Ramallah,

Saturday 8 May

Nablus

10:00 Meeting with Dr. Hussein Alaraj, Deputy Minister of the Local Government and acting Mayor of Nablus

10:30 Meeting with Mr. Ayman Rabba, Chief Architect, Old City Unit, Municipality of Nablus and Mr. Maher Hanbali, City Engineer, including consultation with the committee assessing building damages and allocating funds for the repair.

PM Working session on collected documentation.

Sunday 9 May

Jerusalem Reviewing documentation and reporting

Monday 10 May

Nablus

10.00	Meeting with Mr. Ayman Rabba, Chief Architect, Old City Unit, Municipality of Nablus
10.30	Meeting with Mr. Jalel Dabeek, Civil Engineer, Dept. of Structural Engineering, Al-Najah National University, Nablus.
11.30	Meeting with Dr. Ali Abdelhamid and Dr. Iman Al Amed, Al-Najah National University, Nablus
PM	Site visit to selected sites in the Old City of Nablus accompanied by Mr. Ayman Rabba Mr. Ihab Daoud and Mr. Bassam Hebeisheh

Tuesday 11 May

Hebron: Tel Rumeida

10:0	Meeting with Dr Khaled Kawasme, Director, Hebron Rehabilitation Committee
10:30	Presentation of the activities carried out by the Hebron Rehabilitation Committee
PM	Site visit to the Old Town of Hebron

Wednesday 12 May

Ramallah

AM	Working Session on reporting with Mr. Giovanni Fontana Antonelli
11:00	Courtesy visit to the Palestinian National Commission for Education, Culture and Science
13.00	Meeting with Dr. Nazmi al-Jubeh, Director, Riwaq Centre for Architectural Conservation.
14.00	Meeting with Mrs. Lana Rabadi, Acting Chair of ICOMOS Palestine National Committee, and Mrs. Sahera Bleibleh, Secretary General.
15.00	Debriefing with Dr Hamdan Taha, Director-General, Department of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage, Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities.

Thursday 13 May

09:00	Debriefing with Ms Costanza Farina and Mr. Giovanni Fontana Antonelli.
12:00	Departure from Jerusalem (Flight at 16:00, Ben Gurion Airport)

During the whole time of the mission Mr. Giovanni Fontana Antonelli, Programme Specialist in CLT at UNESCO Office Ramallah, was giving his full support in the office and during field trips to Nablus and Hebron.

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