

## **Museums And Landscape For Sustainable Development Egyptian Perspective**

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Egypt takes on significant projects in the Egyptian cultural heritage field. Egyptian teams restore, conserve and document Pharaonic, Greco-Roman, Coptic and Islamic monuments and objects and partner with the local and international stake holders to train Egyptian heritage professionals and upgrade local museum and conservation infrastructures. Projects and initiatives run the gamut of Egyptian history, while tackling present and future needs in the heritage sector. It is this forward-thinking and comprehensive attitude that constitutes the foundation of Egypt's sustainable approach towards heritage preservation and management.

The concept of sustainable heritage positions monuments, landscapes, objects, local customs and practices as vital tools in supporting the development of communities. Effectively, this means that heritage preservation can contribute towards, and even catalyze, social, economic and environmental development and equity – the three pillars of sustainability. This translates in many projects on the ground: providing hands-on experience to Egyptian archaeologists and conservators in the newest and best methods, outfitting a Roman temple with sustainably sourced local materials and solar panels to decrease energy consumption, or restoring a beloved ancient church and medieval mosque so communities can continue to benefit from their use.

In this respect, Egypt dedicated work in cultural heritage sector not only offers tangible results, such as restored or visibly improved monuments, but also intangible ones. These intangible qualities often reverberate for many years after the completion of a project and can be a challenge to quantify, yet their value is truly immeasurable. These intangible outcomes—the ability for a community to interact in beneficial ways, better themselves, and pursue a good quality of life—define the undercurrent of many projects. They are often defined as social sustainability and augment the impact of projects such as the Monastery churches and Islamic mosques.

The restoration of Islamic mosques relied largely on the traditional skills and know-how of local craftsmen and workers to recreate certain aspects of the monument, such as its prayer niche and ablutions area. A heritage in their own right, these skills are often passed down from one generation to the next. However, commercialized production and a slowdown of demand for traditional workmanship and materials pose substantial challenges. Use of these skills for conservation projects, such as Islamic mosques, encourages craftsmen to retain their specialized lines of work and ensures that these traditions are not lost over time.

A pillar of Egypt conservation project on the Monastery churches was the training and inclusion of the local church figures and the community. Young volunteers were taught about the history of the church and the ongoing conservation process, creating an awareness of the project's significance to share with visitors during guided tours. Members of the church's monastic school also requested and received special trainings on visitor management and the care of the church's conserved artwork and improved facilities, thereby empowering them to better steward the conserved church.

In both of these cases, community engagement was a key aspect of the restoration projects. This is especially important given that both monuments still actively function as houses of worship and community hubs. In restoring historic monuments such as Islamic mosques and the Monastery churches, Egypt certainly provides a physical reinvigoration of the structures. Furthermore, it upholds their functions as purpose-built spaces for communities to reconnect and engage with their faiths, history and sense of identity. These vital qualities maintain productive, equitable and diverse societies.

### **Territory, Region, Landscape**

Territory is usually defined as a geographical area representing a political, administrative, or natural unit. It is the concept of space that is the key element.

Archaeology, however, is a very dynamic discipline, not only in terms of the actual fieldwork which seems to be expanding rapidly in Nubia, but also as a branch of humanities and social sciences where technological advancements offer new possibilities for the collection and interpretation of data. This leads to the formation of new paradigms, offers new approaches, and allows the development of new perspectives on Nubian archaeology.

It is thus my intention to review and discuss from the perspective of landscape archaeology the work (both archaeological and non archaeological) carried out in Nubia on a regional scale.

Although the concept of landscape archaeology is of a relatively recent date there is already a substantial literature dealing with the subject.

The definitions of landscape show that the concept is quite complex and that the word has different meanings, depending on the scholars' background and interests. In the field of Nile Valley any discussion on landscape archaeology would also reflect a variety of approaches and differing scholarly traditions. My favorite concept of landscape archaeology attempts to integrate various perspectives by means of using landscape as a framework for the study of many different aspects of human life in the Nile Valley. It links the artifacts and the ecofacts to a specific place and deals with issues of interest not only to historians, art historians, and prehistorians but also

geographers, sociologists, demographers, and others. Thus, the landscape has not only a geographical and ecological meaning but also has an artistic and sociosymbolic dimension. We can speak, for example, of the “sacred landscapes” with reference to man-made structures such as temples and sacred districts or the natural features such as sacred groves, caves, or mountains such as Jebel Barkal. If we turn our attention to landscape as “scenery” we can study the depiction and meaning of landscapes, or natural features, in Nubian art. This may lead us to quite disparate investigations such as, for example, the study of ancient fauna or the study of the belief system. In sum, it is this network of connections, not necessarily limited to the archaeological field studies of a region or a territory, that lies at the heart of the broadly understood landscape archaeology. Nevertheless, it is the regional field study that often forms the foundation for interpreting the material and on which one may build the comprehensive syntheses.

### **Aswan: A Bridge Between Culture And Nature Landscapes**

Within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted in September 2015 by the United Nations, the international development agenda refers to culture for the first time. This has been lauded by UNESCO as “an unparalleled recognition”. The safeguarding and promotion of Cultural heritage is an end in itself, and at the same time it contributes directly to many of the SDGs — safe and sustainable cities, decent work and economic growth, reduced inequalities, the environment, promoting gender equality and peaceful and inclusive societies.

The indirect benefits of culture are accrued through the culturally-informed and effective implementations of the development goals.

If the SDGs are grouped around the economic, social, and environmental objectives as the three pillars of sustainable development, then culture and creativity contribute to each of these pillars transversally. The economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, in turn, contribute to the safeguarding of cultural heritage and nurturing creativity.

Cultural heritage — both tangible and intangible — and creativity are resources that need to be protected and carefully managed. They can serve both as drivers for achieving the SDGs as well as enablers, when culture-forward solutions can ensure the success of interventions to achieve the SDGs.

#### **Inclusive cities**

Culture has a crucial role to play in making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe resilient and sustainable. An example of this is the salvage of Nubian monuments in Aswan, which has benefited local communities. The ancient rescued temples was transformed into a mixed-used as a tourism destinations and public space for events and cultural activities. Such efforts empower local communities and strengthen the local economy. By bringing together diverse individuals and groups for the development of a project, they also foster social cohesion.

Tourism is a rapidly growing economic sector, both within the country or region and around the world. Cultural tourism accounts for 40 % of world tourism revenues. These have a direct positive impact on SDGs across the board. Cultural heritage that is carefully managed attracts tourism investment in a sustainable way, involving local communities without damaging heritage areas.

#### **Aswan, City of Crafts and Folk Arts**

Aswan, part of UNESCO’s Creative Cities Network, is an example of how Crafts and folk arts has given new momentum to the city, using culture, education and innovation. Besides strengthening civic culture, social equity and peace, the city attracts thousands of tourists and generates income and employment through a range of folk events and a popular craft market.

In Aswan, a project to safeguard intangible heritage trained craftspeople, especially young girls, in the ancient craft such as basketry making. The project also established the sustainable practice of using the indigenous and ubiquitous palm trees. Such an effort furthered environment goals and ensured income generation, besides safeguarding the intangible heritage element of basketry making.

#### **The Synergy Between Cultural And Natural Landscapes**

The history of people and landscapes, whether natural or cultural, is fundamentally connected. Answering key historical questions about this relation will allow us to approach our most important environmental issues in novel ways.

Aswan is rich in both culture and nature landscapes, Elephantine island, Sehel Island and Noble tombs represent the culture landscape in between are Sloga and Ghzal islands are environmental reservations.

History matters is that to be able to predict the effects of contemporary human activity, to create accurate models for future climate change for example, we need to know how modern landscapes have been shaped by the actions of people in the past. “humans have been modifying their environments for a long time. We need to take into account how the landscapes we live in today are the result of millennia of people doing things like burning vegetation, herding animals and farming when we make decisions about how to preserve, restore, or remodel environments. Historical ecology research in museums is all about generating that data so we can figure out how best to manage our world by learning from our past.”

The framework for the 2030 Agenda, in spite of all the references to culture, has not adequately recognized cultural heritage’s significant contribution to the implementation of the SDGs. The precise role and impact of cultural heritage on sustainable development needs to be systematically studied, measured, and operationalized. As the implementation of the SDGs moves forward, further work is necessary to build a systematic and measurable evidence base to demonstrate each of the contributions of cultural heritage to sustainable development.

### **Reshaping Nubian Museum surrounding landscape (Site Management Project )**

The Islamic Necropolis of Aswan represents a unique ensemble of tombs and mausoleums dating back to the 9th century AD.

The Cemetery is not only a popular burial place, but it retained its function as a centre of remembrance, where Muslims from Aswan, in some instances from Upper Egypt and during the important Muled’s (festivals) from all over Egypt gather.

In accordance with the request of the SCA\* the mission of the German Archaeological Institute presents a preliminary study for a sustainable site management.

Our study focuses on the following main points:

- to secure the monuments by means of daily maintenance to allocate distinct areas for each group of users;
- to install facilities for tourists.

The overall concept of the study is based on its consumption that the Nubian Museum and its garden, the Islamic Necropolis and the site of the quarries in the East should form one unity.

The northern part of the cemetery, behind the tv building, will be linked with the garden of the Nubian Museum and can be used as its extension.

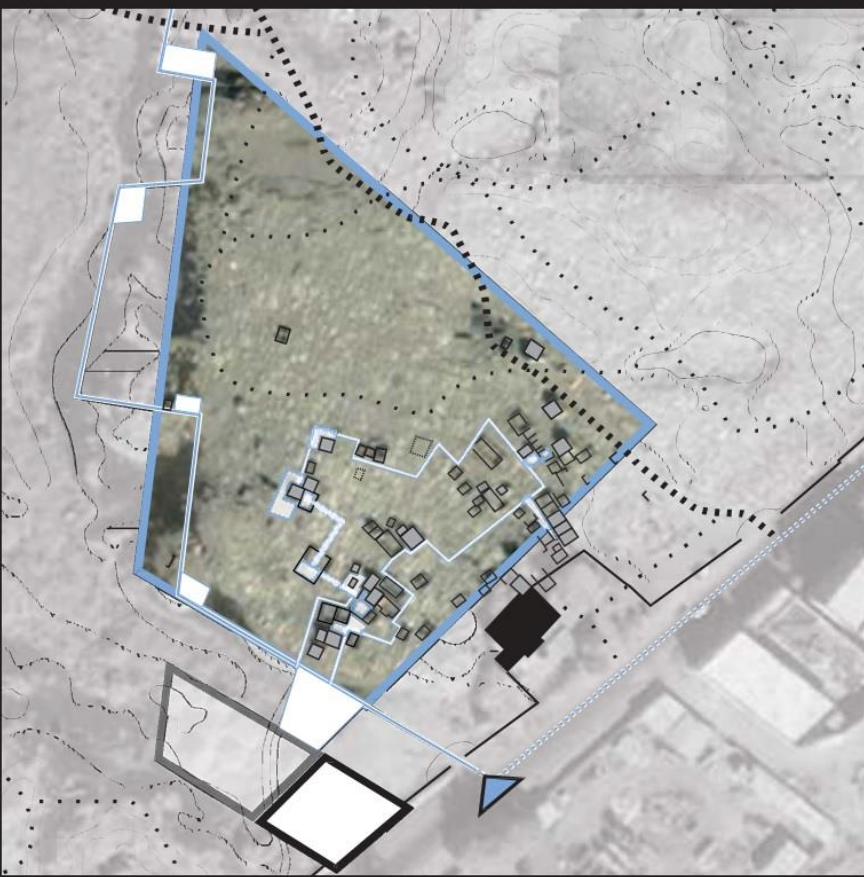
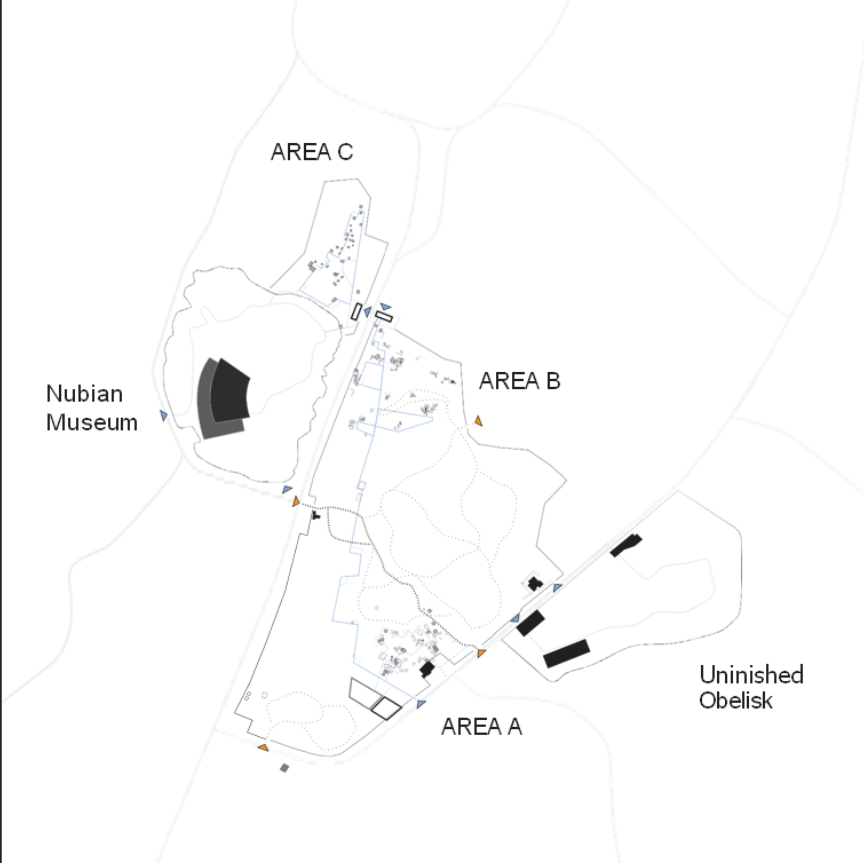
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\* The Supreme Council of Archeology

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**Reshaping Nubian Museum surrounding landscape (Site Management Project )**



**Area A**

- Site Preparation:
- Security Measures
- Lighting of Cemetery
- Securing of Mausoleums
  
- Visitors Infrastructure:
- Rendered Tourist Paths
- Information Panels
  
- Visitors center:
- Museum
- Shops Study Room
- Administration
- Cafeteria / Restaurant
- Ticket Office / Restrooms / Scanning
- Workshops / Maintenance Staff Rooms



**Islamic Necropolis Aswan**



**Area B**

Site Preparation:

- Security Measures
- Removal of Red Wall
- Further Restorations
- Securing of Mausoleums

Lighting of Cemetery

Visitors Infrastructure:

- Rendered Tourist Paths
- Information Panels

Entrance Building:

- Ticket Office
- Restrooms
- Security Control
- Refreshments



**Islamic Necropolis Aswan**



**Area C**

Site Preparation:

- Restoration of Tombs
- Removal of Debris from the Site
- Security Measures

Lighting of Cemetery

Visitors Infrastructure:

- Rendered Tourist Paths
- Information Panels

Entrance Building:

- Ticket Office
- Restrooms
- Security Control
- Refreshments

**FOTO 1-2-3-4** Plan of the Nubian Museum and the surrounding landscape. (Site management project).

Area A The unfinished Obelisk. It would have measured about 137 feet (42 meters) if completed and is estimated to weigh around 1,200 tons. It's thought that the female pharaoh Hatshepsut commissioned the work during the 18th dynasty, more than 3,500 years ago.

Area B The Islamic Necropolis of Aswan.

Area C The overall concept of the project is based on its consumption that the Nubian Museum and its garden, the Islamic Necropolis and the site of the quarries in the East should form one unity. The northern part of the cemetery, behind the tv bulding, will be linked with the garden of the Nubian Museum and can be used as its extension



**FOTO 5** The Islamic Cemetery (Area C)