

## **MANAGEMENT of WORLD HERITAGE SITES in TURKEY**

Zeynep Ahunbay\*, ICOMOS Turkey

Nine monuments and sites from Turkey are included on the World Heritage List, consisting of individual monuments and natural, urban and archaeological sites. The selection consists of Troy, Hattusha, Nemrut Dağ, Xanthos and Letoon, Hierapolis, Cappadocia, Historic Areas of Istanbul, Great Mosque and Hospital in Divriği and Safranbolu . The accent on archaeological sites reflects that Anatolia has been the scene of great cultures; with extraordinary remains from Neolithic, Hittite, Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine and Seljuk cultures, spanning a time period from about 2000 BC to the medieval era.

The nine properties from Turkey were inscribed on the WHL between 1986 and 1998, during the period when management plans were not demanded as part of the nomination files. In the recent years, Turkey has not succeeded in completing a file and presenting it to the WH List, due to lack of management plans. Firstly, the concept of management plan as required by the WHC was not included in the Turkish preservation system. In order to overcome this problem, Ministry of Culture made an amendment in the legal apparatus and a new law was put into force in 2005, enabling the government to make arrangements for the preparation of management plans and to fulfill the requirement set by UNESCO. As a step forward in the process, expert advisory bodies were formed to help the development of management plans for WH sites. Ministry of Culture collaborated with local governments and other partners, initiated programs to support awareness building about WH sites.

The Turkish tentative list from 2009 is very extensive, including more archaeological sites from the rich variety of the cultural strata in Turkey. Karain, and Çatalhöyük, sites with the earliest marks of human existence are included. There are also several very representative and well preserved archaeological sites from Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine periods. Some historic cities with medieval foundations, like Mardin and Alanya and an outstanding Ottoman monument, Selimiye in Edirne, the masterpiece of the renowned Architect Sinan is also included.

Protection of universal values against emerging global threats is a challenging issue for historic urban centers. Long term neglect as well as strong pressures from migration, mass tourism and new development threaten these properties. The management problems have to be overcome with great care. The conservation of urban sites requires large teams of dedicated people, fully informed in the profession.

It is important to develop urgent measures and establish constant surveillance on the changing dynamics of the urban sites. Local governments have great role in the protection activities. Their information about WH values and capabilities for action need to be improved. There is no doubt that knowing more about the international standards and practices will lead to a better appreciation and care for WH. It is important to have dialogue with international experts and collaborate for the preservation of WH . Working together and benefiting from the experience in other countries can facilitate the process of overcoming difficulties.

---

\* ITU Faculty of Architecture, 34 437 Taksim Istanbul, ahunbaya@itu.edu.tr