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DIRECTORATE FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE, Oslo, Norway

NOKALAKEVI ARCHAEOLOGICAL-ARCHITECTURAL COMPLEX
NOKALAKEVI MUNICIPALITY
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REPORT:
Second mission to Nokalakevi
November 2010
English edition

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SUMMARY: The second Norwegian visit to Nokalakevi was part of a workshop concentrated around two issues: status and development of the Nokalakevi Management Plan, and presentation of Nokalakevi to visitors through the development of walkways and site infrastructure. The issues were illustrated and discussed through a number of presentations and in addition practical exercises on site, resulting in concrete ideas for concrete solutions.

KEYWORDS: Cultural heritage management; workshop; management planning; presentation; infrastructure; conservation; masonry; Nokalakevi, Georgia

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Cover photo:

Head of ceramic bull at Nokalakevi Museum, 10th C. AD.

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*Some of the workshop participants in the reception hall, Nokalakevi Museum.
Photo: Z. Tsertsvadze*

Foreword

The first Norwegian mission to Nokalakevi took place in October / November 2009. Based on recommendations to Riksantikvaren – the Directorate for Cultural Heritage in Norway and expressed wishes from the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia, it was decided to follow up with a Georgian-Norwegian workshop on presentation of Nokalakevi. This workshop took place 10-19 November 2010. Besides working together on practical solutions for presenting Nokalakevi to visitors, presentations and discussions concerning the Nokalakevi Management Plan were a central issue during the mission. In addition, we discussed topics of relevance to Nokalakevi during visits to Khomakirde Fortress and the Chchorotsku Local Historical Museum, and to Mtskheta – the Museum, the archaeological sites at Samtavro and the Bagineti fortified Acropolis with the ruins of the King's Palace.

The list of workshop participants, 13 from Georgia and 2 from Norway, is presented in chapter 2 of this report.

We would like to thank all the participants of the workshop lead by Director of Nokalakevi Museum-Reserve professor David Lomitashvili, for a fruitful, exiting, interesting and friendly stay during which we were able to do all we had planned to do – and more. Special thanks to the Director of the Chchorotsku Local Historical Museum and his staff who arranged an interesting and pleasant day for us in Chchorotsku. Also many thanks to Head of educational and informational procurement unit of the National Agency, David Cheishvili, for taking us to Mtskheta: to the Museum, to the archaeological educational program in Samtavro and to the conservation and presentation activities at the Bagineti King's Palace ruins; and to the Director of Mtskheta Museum-Reserve, Nukri Maisurashvili, who followed us to the sites and in the Museum. Manana Vardzelashvili, Chief coordinator of UNESCO and international relations unit of the National Agency, took special care of everything – including us, and was all the time translating for us, for which we sincerely thank her. Also thanks to Head of management of protection zones and monitoring unit of the National Agency, Nika Antidze, for developing our understanding of cultural heritage legislation and practices in Georgia. We would like to thank Ekaterine Lomidze and her daughter Sophia especially for all the good meals they cooked for us all in 'Ekaterine Chalet'.

Special regards to the young and eager participants of the workshop, Tatuli, Zura, George, Tsothe and Lali, for at all times keeping us on our toes with questions, ideas and surprising comments, with a good combination of seriousness, laughter and good humour.

This report comes in two language versions, and we thank Peter Dgebuadze for translating it into Georgian.

Sarpsborg / Tromsø / Oslo, December 2010

Anne-Sophie Hygen

Knut Helskog

1. Mission program

- Wednesday 10 November: Arrival in Tbilisi at 03.40.
Departure for Nokalakevi by car at 12.00
Planning meeting in the evening
- Thursday 11 November: Meeting for all at the Nokalakevi field station, orientation about the workshop program.
Presentation by D. Lomitashvili: Site characteristics, features, monuments, history and excavations.
Presentation by N. Antidze: Legal framework and preconditions.
Presentation by D. Cheishvili: Ideas for site management, based on the Gobustan model for management.
Discussions.
Evening: Discussion, and mutual questions and answers.
- Friday 12 November: Meeting for all at the Nokalakevi field station.
Presentation by G. Tugusgi and T. Chankotadze, prepared by P. Dgebuadze, G. Tugusgi and T. Chankotadze: Marketing and infrastructure.
Presentation by M. Vardzelashvili, prepared by G. Gagoshidze and Z. Tsertsvadze: Action plan for documentation and conservation.
Presentation by A-S. Hygen: Conservation of Medieval ruins in Østfold, Norway.
Presentation by K. Helskog: Presentation measures as protection; solutions in Alta, Zalavruga (Russia), Gobustan (Azerbaijan), Sarmishsai (Uzbekistan) and Korea.
Evening presentation by A-S. Hygen: Presentation measures at prehistoric sites and monuments in Østfold, Norway
Discussions.
- Saturday 13 November: Field work in groups: Suggested solutions for walkways and infrastructure in Nokalakevi (the monuments on the plain, the wooden building and the museum).
Evening: Information and discussions.
- Sunday 14 November: Visit to Khomakirde Fortress and the Chchorotsku Local Historical Museum. Meeting with Museum Director Guram Malania and the Museum staff.
Evening: Drawing of suggested solutions for presentation measures in Nokalakevi.
Presentation and discussion of plans for new museum and walkways at Uplistsikhe Historical-Architectural Museum-Reserve.
- Monday 15 November: Information and discussions on ruins documentation, conservation principles, documentation of choices and planning of maintenance and following up of measures.

Field work: On-site discussions and evaluation of everybody's ideas and suggestions for walkways and infrastructure in Nokalakevi. Outline of general principles for presentation.
Presentation by D. Cheishvili: Educational archaeological program for school children in Samtavro Archaeological Valley, Great Mtskheta Museum-Reserve.
Presentation by A-S. Hygen: Management and maintenance of archaeological sites and monuments.

- Tuesday 16 November: Survey of the Nokalakevi Museum: Ideas for improvements.
Presentation by I. Dolidze: Development of museum exhibitions; the new and reconstructed museum / visitors' centre at Gonio Fortress Archaeological-Architectural Museum-Reserve.
Presentation by I. Dolidze: State of, and improvements of, museum collections within the Action Plan for presentation (Nokalakevi Management Sub-plan 3).
Discussions.
- Wednesday 17 November: Office work: Preparation of a list of recommendations.
Afternoon: Return to Tbilisi by car.
- Thursday 18 November: Morning: Visit to Mtskheta: Demonstration of the educational archaeological program for school children in Samtavro. Visit to the Museum and the Bagineti Fortress and King's Palace.
Afternoon: Presentation by K. Helskog & A-S. Hygen at the National Agency, for directors of the Museum-Reserves in Georgia and the Agency's staff: Cultural Heritage Management: Standards, requirements and challenges.
Evening: Dinner arranged by the National Agency, with Museum-Reserves' directors.
- Friday 19 November: Departure from Tbilisi at 05.15.

2. Workshop participation

1. Nika Antidze, Head of Management of protection zones and monitoring unit
2. Tatuli Tsereteli, Coordinator of UNESCO and International Relations Unit
3. Gvantsa Gegechkori, Coordinator Moveable Monuments and Museum Collection Management Unit
4. David Cheishvili, Head of educational and informational procurement unit
5. Zura Tsertsvadze, Coordinator of Unmovable Monuments Attribution Unit
6. George Tugusgi, Chief Coordinator of Marketing and infrastructure Unit
7. Tsothe Chankotadze, Coordinator of Marketing and infrastructure Unit
8. Paata Dolidze, Chief Coordinator of The National Agency
9. Nino Djolia, Nokalakevi Museum Collection's Keeper
10. Lali Tsomaia, Nokalakevi Museum guide, translator
11. Manana Vardzelashvili, Chief coordinator of UNESCO and international relations unit
12. Irma Dolidze, Head of Moveable Monuments and Museum Collection Management Unit

13. David Lomitashvili, Director of Nokalakevi Architectural-Archaeological Museum-Reserve
14. Knut Helskog, Tromsø University Museum
15. Anne-Sophie Hygen, Østfold County Council (Norwegian project leader)

3. Workshop presentations

D. Lomitashvili:

Site characteristics, features, monuments, history and excavations

The most important part of Nokalakevi is located on the terrace by the river Tekhuri, where the oldest standing monuments through archaeological excavations are dated to the 4th C. AD. The three 4-6th CC. AD Fortress walls are unique in Caucasus. The restoration of the Citadel 6th C. AD church is finished and only lime mortar was applied. While excavations except for three expeditions were halted during the difficult 1990s, yearly Anglo-Georgian archaeological expeditions, lead by Prof. Lomitashvili, were again carried out from 2001 onwards. The large 2010 expedition confirmed that the oldest cultural layers date to 12th C. BC, and the artefacts from to the Late Bronze / Early Iron Ages show that there were connections to populations in other areas.

In the early Medieval Christian period there were still pagan burials. Some 8-7th CC. BC decorated ceramic artefacts show connections to the Cretan-Mycenaean culture, other artefacts point to Egyptian technology and other again to the Hellenistic cultural sphere. Nokalakevi obviously was part of a wide contact- and trade system. Situated in the valley at the south foothills of the Caucasian Mountain Range and at the crossroads between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, Nokalakevi became an administrative, political, religious and strategic centre – a small kingdom – and a strategic point for cultural, economical, social and political contacts and exchange from the Late Bronze Age (8-7th CC. BC) to the devastation of Nokalakevi in the 7th C. AD.



The eastern part of the fortified town ruins from the south.

Comments

- Nokalakevi carries a long, impressive, important and manifold history, not only of concern to Georgia but also to areas to the east and west. Many different and intriguing stories about Nokalakevi can be told to Georgians as well as to foreign visitors.

N. Antidze:

Legal framework and preconditions

The largest part of the Nokalakevi site complex has been transferred to the ownership of the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia. Some monuments – the churches and church ruins – belong to the Church (the Patriarchate) and are connected to pilgrimage. There is one private stakeholder owning 2800m² of land who lives and works the land within the Fortress. Another private stakeholder has a property between the Museum building and the 19th C. Wooden Building immediately outside the Fortress Walls. Presentation and tourism must be considered and developed in dialogue between all stakeholders; the question of different interests and categories of visitors must be solved. It is suggested to create a committee with representatives of all the stakeholders. The Patriarchate has expressed the wish to build a new church on one of the church ruins.

Comments

- It is both necessary and proper to solve issues and challenges through cooperation between all stakeholders. However, solutions must always – and primarily – be based on site protection and preservation.
- The Norwegian advisers *strongly* advise against building on any of the ruins, whatever the motive. This would mean a serious break with the site's integrity and authenticity.

D. Cheishvili:

Ideas for site management incl. recommendations

The Nokalakevi monuments, established for different uses, are closely connected with the landscape features and their strategic functions. Still today the place has a strategic position and can play an important role for tourism in Georgia besides for education and training.



When rehabilitated, the Wooden Building to the left has interesting possibilities for use. Nokalakevi Museum to the right and a private house in the middle.

The Museum-Reserve staff is well educated and professional within several fields, including working with school children. The Museum cooperates well with the local Government who also pays for the school visits. The British participants in archaeological expeditions give English lessons to the children, who also take part in excavations. Publications have been produced both in the Soviet time and afterwards (books, film, web-site, leaflets and information in school books). It is recommended to carry out archaeological excavations in the Citadel area in order to supplement the knowledge of the whole area. The Museum library needs to be supplemented. The 19th C. Wooden Building should be rehabilitated and become an educational centre, and school teachers should be invited to lectures and information. CD-films should be prepared for long distance dissemination of knowledge and school programs. Special programs for children / students should be prepared, based on experiences from other sites / programs.

Local employment and involvement in activities should be a priority. It is important to collaborate with tourist agencies and to further develop channels for information and dissemination of knowledge and interest; such as brochures with different topics. Eventually, the Citadel monuments should be included in the visitors' walkway system, but there are large challenges concerning vegetation and the conservation and safeguarding of the ruins. The 1988 Museum exhibitions should be renewed and an ethnographic corner included.

Comments

- The ideas and visions are very good and very ambitious, but a lot of work remains to prepare the site for increased attention and visitation. Keywords: Sustainable systems of development; preservation of authenticity and integrity.
- It will be necessary to make strict priorities. Preparations and marketing should be coordinated and always ahead of increasing visitation and pressure on the site. Be ahead of the development – see what happens – be up front of visitors' demands instead of desperately seeking solutions when the problems are already there.
- Increased visitation will eventually generate income to the community, but it must be accepted that it will take some time.
- Presentation and touristification must be based on the premises of protection, preservation, minimum intervention and maintaining authenticity, and good management and monitoring routines.

G. Tugusgi and T. Chankotadze:

Marketing and infrastructure

The main aims of the Management Plan are to ensure conservation, preservation and site security, and to keep the authenticity of the Nokalakevi Monument. If it is well preserved, it will be attractive to visitors. Each intervention must be considered in relation to site authenticity, and ecological methods must be a priority. Marketing, infrastructure development and presentation should be planned, adopted and accepted within the framework of site safety. Marketing should be directed towards creating pleasure, generating income, increasing information and increasing visitors' motivation to come back.

On-site issues: Road-signs; parking lot outside the area; garbage control; emergency facilities; café; ticket office; information signs by the entrance; lights; vegetation care and control; walkways to the monuments to be presented; information of each monument; benches; binoculars to view the whole area; protection of individual monuments; arrows showing the

walkway directions; permanent security and control; keep the site clean and in good care; new museum exhibitions with good lighting system and fire protection; internet information; enlargement of artefact storage space with climate control; visitors' centre in the Wooden Building with exhibits of ethnography and children's works.

Marketing issues: Spreading of attractive information and leaflets to hotels, airports and public places; advertising signs; postcards and souvenirs; ecological tourist packages / tours; information about school offers; create an information centre with museum shop, sales of souvenirs / copies of artefacts found in Nokalakevi, local crafts and products, maps and leaflets. Create local income; uniforms for employees; touch-screen information and audio-guides with GPS-system for control; create a questionnaire; monitoring of the marketing system; statistics.

Expected outcome: Increased awareness and interest; improved visitors' behaviour; motivation of school children to respect their Cultural Heritage; increased attractiveness and safety of the site; job creation.

Comments

- There are 11 Museum-Reserves under the umbrella of the National Agency. Nokalakevi needs to be made a priority concerning fund-raising; however this may be a problem in relation to Georgian legislation. From the Agency's part, they intend to start with creation of attention in different ways, and to carry out the Educational Unit's plans for 2011.
- Creating public attention and interest may generate action among ministries and the President.
- The number of visitors in 2010 was 7500, up from 3500 in 2009. This is the result of conscious work, not the least towards the schools.
- There is an agreement with a tourist agency to include Nokalakevi on the way to Svaneti in 2011.
- Suggestion: Make a leaflet presenting the Nokalakevi project and present it to possible fund-givers.
- Advice: Make priorities for implementation, be realistic in priorities and start with low-key simple and cheap information.

M. Vardzelashvili, prepared by G. Gagoshidze and Z. Tsertsvadze:

Action plan for documentation and conservation

A considerable amount of documentation material exists from the 1970s onwards, such as reports from archaeological expeditions, photos, drawings, etc. An ID-card is made for each separate monument, and a so-called Passport for the whole Nokalakevi protected area. The documentation material is digitalized and available for the Agency. In 1991 and 1996 more than 945 items were stolen from the Museum; half originals, half copies, all of which were not properly registered. The Plan includes descriptions of conservation status and previous conservation / restoration measures, and short recommended measures on conservation and care. Much conservation of the ruins is required, in general connected to the extensive use of cement. The ruin of the Royal Bath is a cause for worry, and emergency conservation is recommended, including the removal of cement and application of lime mortar, and potentially building a protective structure. The Wooden Building and the Museum are included in the considerations of each monument.

A-S. Hygen:

Conservation of Medieval ruins in Østfold, Norway

Conservation of St. Nikolas church ruin, Tenor church ruin and Værne Monastery church ruin in Østfold were used as cases to describe chosen models for ruins conservation in Norway: removal of all cement; use of Natural Hydraulic lime (NHL 3,5 recommended; middle strength); soft wall top (not in all but several cases. In other cases: hard wall top) consisting of Bentonite clay dry mixed with gravel (1:3, 8-10cm) covered by 2 layers of turf, folded from both sides and meeting in the middle of the wall top with a 5-7cm layer of soil and pebbles (10:1) between the turf layers; gluing of split and exfoliated stone. The International Institute for Conservation's definition of conservation was quoted: "All actions aimed at the safeguarding of cultural property for the future. Its purpose is to study, record, retain and restore the culturally significant qualities of the sites with the least possible intervention."

K. Helskog:

Presentation measures as protection; solutions in Alta, Zalavruga (Russia), Gobustan (Azerbaijan), Sarmishsai (Uzbekistan) and South Korea

From 1997 the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has through Riksantikvaren financed bilateral cooperation directed towards the management (documentation, conservation, protection, and sustainable presentation) of rock art sites, among others at the river Vyg in the Republic of Karelia in Russia and at Sarmishsay in Uzbekistan. In relation to presentation, experiences from this cooperation as well as examples of presentation of rock art at Gobustan in Azerbaijan, Alta in Norway and in South Korea, illustrate that the ways rock art is presented are many and adapted to local conditions and situations. At all sites walkways lead visitors to and between panels, and platforms are constructed when needed. Sometimes the surface of the walkways and platforms are made of wood or stones, and at other times they are outlined by stones directly on the natural surface. Each viewing station along the walkways has a number which refers to descriptions in a guidebook. Furthermore, it is emphasised that it is forbidden in any way to damage the rock art or any other cultural monuments in that area, and signs point out that it is strictly forbidden to leave the walkways. The focus of some of the monuments serves to protect those that are not opened for visitation. This strict control of visitation protects both the monuments and the natural environment from unnecessary erosion.

A-S. Hygen:

Presentation measures at prehistoric sites and monuments in Østfold, Norway

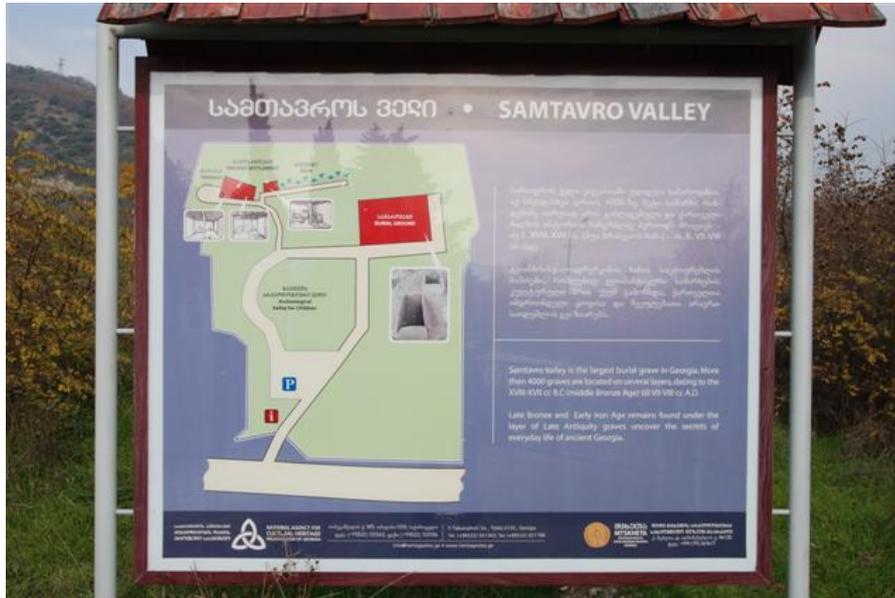
A large project on presentation of sites and monuments in Østfold was opened this year, consisting of 11 sites with Bronze Age rock art and Iron Age cemeteries, besides a church ruin: "The Prehistoric Road Project". New signposts have been created: One type for introduction by the respective parking lots, another type for information of the particular sites. The signposts and information boards have been especially designed, and harmonized with "The Solberg Tower", a place for information of prehistoric and historic sites and monuments, time and landscape in the middle of the area. So far, one visitors' platform has been built, leading to two adjacent rock art sites. The platform is carefully planned and built in harmony with the landscape; it is of high quality materials, is reversible and is created with regard to the principle of "availability for all" ("universal design").

D. Cheishvili:

Educational archaeological program for school children in Samtavro Archaeological Valley, Great Mtskheta Museum-Reserve

The program was designed in 2010 for younger (4-6th grade) and older (7-11th grade) school children respectively, and according to national school curricula. The program goals are:

Nourish respect for the Nation’s Cultural Heritage and historic past; introduce the profession of archaeology to children; help children to open the doors to the past and to the lives of their ancestors; help children to develop important skills, like research, analysis and discussion; help children to develop their level of knowledge. They have created copies of burials in 5 sandboxes, from 3 periods: Middle Bronze, Late Bronze / Early Iron Age, Late Antiquity. Together with a plastic skeleton they have placed copies of ceramics and metal objects in the “graves”.



Information signpost by the entrance to Samtavro.

A 120 minute program contains the following: Visit to the cemetery and settlement sites (immediately close by); discussion about archaeology; receive archaeological excavation equipment; excavations of the “graves”; analyses of the finds (weighing, drawing, measuring, writing of diary etc.); restoration of ceramics. Finally they receive the “Young Archaeologist’s Certificate”. As homework: The importance of archaeology for Georgian history in the area. Two archaeologists and two guides act as instructors. The program takes place at weekends and holydays, and other days if agreed by the Agency. The number of participants is minimum 10, maximum 30 (max 6 per sandbox). The price is 5 Lari per child. The program is very popular and all available places were immediately filled. The Agency evaluates the program each week. [The program was visited on 18 November. See chapter 7 below].

A-S. Hygen:

Management and maintenance of archaeological sites and monuments

Valdisholm 12/13th C. AD fortress ruin, covering a tiny island in the river Glomma, Østfold, Norway, was used as example of measures when the vegetation has taken completely over. The solution so far has been to carefully cut some trees and let two goats deal with the rough vegetation. Plans are to continue grazing for some seasons (possible with a sheep in addition), and when the contours of the ruined walls are more free from vegetation, to document and evaluate the condition of the ruin. The importance of maintenance and continuous vegetation control was demonstrated through the large Opstad Iron Age cemetery in Østfold. After having cut down an enormous amount of trees, the mountain-high pile of waste from the trees was brought out of the area. The site is now grazed by sheep, but still manual vegetation work is regularly carried out by a specially appointed group of people. This group works with

vegetation maintenance and care of sites and monuments in the whole municipality all year round. While the County Council paid for the initial vegetation works and information signposts, Sarpsborg municipality finances the maintenance according to a 10 year contract.

I. Dolidze:

Development of museum exhibitions; the new and reconstructed museum / visitors' centre at Gonio Fortress Archaeological-Architectural Museum-Reserve

The Gonio Museum-Reserve received its status in 1994, and is located on the Black Sea coast, which with its sub-tropic climate is attractive to tourists. The Fortress Walls are restored like the ones in Nokalakevi, while the arches were reconstructed in 2009. The monument dates to the Ottoman, Byzantine and Roman periods. The remains of the first settlement date to 8-7th CC. BC. About 25.000 artefacts have been found, of which most are deposited in the museum since the storage and security problems are now solved. The 18th C. AD 128m² building of the Ottoman cultural-political Muslim centre was given a new wooden roof and equipped as information centre / museum. The goal was to show exhibits and to tell stories about the site through its 8th C. BC-19th C. AD history. Fragmented ceramics, metal, coins and glass had been found, and the question was what stories could be told from them. The exhibition designers chose to exhibit posters (100x60cm) with photos, drawings and texts (in Georgian and English) together with artefacts, organized chronologically in cases along a wall together with a general information poster. The principle was to tell small individual stories in each showcase.



Irma Dolidze giving her presentation of the Gonio Fortress Archaeological-Architectural Museum-Reserve museum / information centre in the Nokalakevi field station.

It was planned as an information centre, but in the last month before the opening it was decided to turn the centre into a museum and also show artefacts. The lighting of the exhibition room is very original: irregularly spaced fluorescent lights hanging from the ceiling. The project was carried out as cooperation between the Education Unit and the Marketing Unit of the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation and the Ministry of Education. The number of paying visitors increased to 50-60.000 during the summer season this year, and nearly as many was admitted without payment (disabled, refugees etc.).

I. Dolidze:

State of, and improvements of, museum collections within the Action Plan for presentation (Nokalakevi Management Sub-plan 2)

Based on the Management Plan scheduled to be finished in 2011, the Action Plan concerning the development of Nokalakevi Museum has the years 2012-15 as a short / middle term perspective. The Museum chapter will begin with short descriptions of the establishment of the Nokalakevi Museum in 1979, the available exhibition space, the collections and the artefact storage space. Today, 533 of the 3300 artefacts stored in the Museum are exhibited. There is no climate control and no security installations. The Museum building is in need of reconstruction and repair and the 1500m² garden / yard makes it possible to increase the size of the building, especially in the back.



Children visiting the Nokalakevi Museum exhibitions.

Requirements which will be introduced in the plan: Permanent and temporary exhibitions, and space for new finds from excavations; conference hall for 50 people; conservation lab; fire protection and security systems; climate control; new visitors' and staff toilets; offices; rehabilitation of the entrance area; facilities for disabled; museum garden. Further, the plan will deal with: Documentation of the Museum collections, including digitalization of data; artefact conservation and presentation; public catalogue of artefacts; dealing with the future of the private houses within the larger Museum outdoor area. Four development stages with timeframe and responsibility for implementation are foreseen: 1) evaluation pre-project; 2) begin implementation; 3) installation of technical equipment; 4) creation of exhibitions. The National Agency together with the local Government will carry most of the responsibilities.

Comments

It is considered important to plan the rehabilitation of the Museum contemporaneous with new exhibitions – in relation to what they will want to show, where and how – but without losing the necessary flexibility.

K. Helskog & A-S. Hygen:

Cultural Heritage Management: Standards, requirements and challenges

(Presented to Museum-Reserves' and the National Agency's staff, 18 November)

- Declaration of ICOMOS, Stockholm 1998 marking the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: *“The rights to a past is a human right for people today and in the future. To protect the rights to a past means to protect ones own and others' Cultural Heritage, meaning that this human right is followed by duties and responsibilities at all levels. Respect, knowledge, taking part and discussion are central elements in the protection of the Cultural Heritage.”*
- ICOMOS, Mexico 1999, International Cultural Tourism Charter: Managing Tourism at Places of Heritage Significance: *“Cultural heritage monuments are irreplaceable starting points to create narratives about the past and about long prehistoric and historic processes, which are dynamic, not static. Everybody should have the possibility to create stories about the past. The Cultural Heritage belongs to all and is universal, and everybody have rights and obligations connected to it.”*
- Questions to ask for Management planning: WHAT to do, HOW to do it, WHEN to do it and WHO shall do it? In order to be able to manage a site / landscape well, we must know WHAT we manage.
- Recommended site management priorities: Establish a permanent, competent, cross-scientific management team; conservation, safeguarding and maintenance of the monuments; high quality minimum intervention and non-intrusive installations; establish and carry out systematic monitoring routines, including of visitors' behaviour; regular vegetation management.
- WHO shall / can do the job? Staff requirements: Relevant education / background / experience in relation to specific needs in the area / museum in question; staff for planning, management and maintenance.
- The aims of the Management Master Plan – the superior framework for implementation of site management, conservation and presentation: Identify and describe the premises and preconditions for the comprehensive management, conservation, preservation, presentation, maintenance, monitoring and development of the site / monument with its cultural and natural values; definition and descriptions of site values and qualities and what has been done to identify, document and research them; issues and challenges needed to be dealt with; status, premises, policies, cooperation structures and available local, regional, state and other resources; basic guidelines and strategies for site preservation and management; definition of the roles, responsibilities and obligations of the different cooperative partners in relation to the tasks and issues to be dealt with.
- Management Action Plans, inseparable parts of the Master Management Plan: How issues and challenges are to be dealt with in the short-, middle- and long term perspectives, in a practical and goal-oriented way; strategies, objectives, recommendations and planned actions; practical implementation of principles of sustainability, minimum intervention, preservation of site integrity and authenticity, and applied respect for inherent past and present site qualities and values; identification of responsibilities for implementation of each activity; identification of the need for resources.
- Management planning: Cross-scientific teamwork; multi-scientific approach; based on documentation and research; identification of issues and needs; official political and administrative anchoring; local involvement; seek advice among colleagues; combine idealism and realism (what is best – what is possible).
- Protection- and preservation-based presentation: *Protection* – “the mission” – the definition of certain alternative acts as unacceptable and illegal, and others as accepted;

Preservation – conscious strategic and practical choices of acts to maintain / create a situation of lasting protection; such as conservation, care, presentation and education; *Integrity* – *Material integrity* refers to the material completeness and sound condition of an object or a site, whereas *historical integrity* relates to the current form of heritage resource as a result of growth and changes over time. *Keywords*: Sustainability, minimum intervention, preservation of authenticity, integrity.

- Requirements for protection: In order to be able to carry out protection of cultural heritage sites and monuments in a long-term perspective, broad support, interest, public attention and engagement is a requirement. Therefore, protection programs must also include interpretation, presentation and information. Presentation and public engagement at all levels is a precondition for preservation.
- Implementation of the Management Plans: The Management Plans must be *used*; the Management Plans must regularly be *revised*; Management Action Plans must be used as bases for yearly *activity plans*; the yearly activity plans must be *evaluated* in relation to implementation and results.
- All plans and actions must be followed up by obligating long-term site monitoring, maintenance, care and control.

4. Nokalakevi Management Plan: progress and status

The Management Plan for Nokalakevi will consist of a Master Management Plan and 3 Management Sub-plans (Action Plans):

1. Documentation and Conservation
2. Management, Monitoring and Maintenance
3. Presentation: Education, Information and Tourism

The information needed for the Management Master Plan is abundant since the Monument is well studied and documented (ID-cards, Passport, reports). The main task will be to organise the relevant information, and restrict it to what is strictly necessary to fulfil the intentions of the Master Plan.

As was presented during the workshop, much preparation work has been done on the Action Plans. Drafts of all three Action Plans are made. What remains is to organise and structure needs, ideas and intentions, and to make strict timeframe priorities according to what is realistic and possible. Some of the information included in the first drafts should be moved to the Master Management Plan as it is general information about the Monument; likewise some information may rather be annexed to the Master Plan instead of being included in the Action Plans. The Management Plan must be approved by the right authorities, anchored locally and financed. The National Agency's intention is to have the Management Plan finished in the spring 2011.

The intention is to use the Nokalakevi Management Plan as a model for the other Museum-Reserves in Georgia.

5. Walkways and infrastructure in Nokalakevi

Besides discussing management planning, the main intention of the 2010 workshop was to outline ideas and practical solutions for presenting Nokalakevi to visitors; on site, in the

Museum and through information material. As is the case with the Management Plan, solutions in Nokalakevi will serve as a model for other Museum-Reserves.

Since plans and ideas for the Museum, marketing and general information is presented above (chapter 3), the following will concentrate on walkways and the infrastructure connected to these.

The workshop participants divided into groups, and each group prepared suggested solutions for direction of walkways, monuments to include and in which order, the surface quality of the walkways, and the question of on-site signposts (“banners” in Georgian terminology) vs. numbered stations.

5.1. Situation and challenges

During the workshop, it was agreed that only the monuments on the terrace between the river and the Museum and the field station should be developed for visitation. The situation on the hill north of the terrace – the continuation of the City Wall and the Citadel – is too complicated to allow for visitation at the present: very unstable ruins, massive vegetation, and very steep, challenging and partly dangerous access. The newly repaired Citadel church is, however, accessed from the main road to the east.

All solutions must be discussed with the stakeholders, not the least the Patriarchate who has the ownership of the two churches and the four church ruins. The question of the two private houses must be discussed and dealt with.

5.2. Recommendations from the Norwegian advisers

Walkway route recommendations

Suggested walkway models with information stations are submitted to the Agency.

- The first stop should be Nokalakevi museum with ticket office.
- If the private house between the Museum and the Wooden Building can be removed, the walkway should lead directly to this building. If not, the entrance to the site with ticket control should be where it is today although renewed, and a two way walkway should lead to/from the Wooden Building.
- New toilets are necessary, and suggested position is by the north-east back corner of the Wooden Building. These should be biological / ecological to avoid digging in the ground.
- After the City Wall gate, the walkway leads to the left, to the ruins of the King’s Palace; then to the Baths, back to the main path, past the Garrison, turns north of the Royal Bath, then the Tunnel, the church ruins starting with the southernmost, behind the Church of the Forty Martyrs, the Bell Tower and back to the City Wall gate.
- The question of visitors admitted into the Church of the Forty Martyrs, and the possibility to lead visitors behind the church, must be raised with the Patriarchate.
- Visitors should be allowed to enter the church ruin south of the Church of the Forty Martyrs and the Palace ruin room immediately south of this church ruin. The grounds within the ruined walls should be cleared of vegetation and covered with gravel / pebbles.

Walkway details recommendations

- Information boards should be restricted to areas outside the City Wall: By the Museum, by the Wooden Building and outside the City Wall gate. The reason why we strongly advise against on-site signposts (“banners”) is that they will be extremely intrusive since they must be quite large in order to be able to read for more than a few persons at the time and with texts in two languages.
- Other site information should be connected to numbered stations with corresponding information in a leaflet (with map, free of charge with the entrance ticket) and a guidebook (to be bought). Guides can use the same stations in their guiding.
- Station numbers, arrows showing the walking direction, and STOP-signs should be fastened on boulders.
- Road- and walkway surfaces should be compacted gravel (or pebbles from the river banks). The asphalt cover of the road through the Nokalakevi terrace should be removed altogether.
- A c. 50 cm high dry stone- and gravel / pebble platform is acceptable north of the Royal Bath, in an east-west direction, facing the ruin towards the south.
- The Royal Bath should be fenced off in a physically and visually minimum intervention way.
- The walkway leading to the Tunnel must be secured with a fence (very steep towards the river).
- The river bank at the end of the Tunnel stairs must be secured (to avoid mishaps).
- Only 10 persons at the time should be allowed to enter the Tunnel.
- The excavation trenches should be filled in and surplus soil deposits removed.
- The edges along the ruin walls should be cleared of vegetation and lined with gravel for vegetation control (c. 35 cm wide and 25 cm deep). Maintenance will be necessary.
- Vegetation and garbage control in the whole area.



The river bank at the end of the Tunnel stairs must be secured (to avoid mishaps). Only 10 persons at the time should be allowed to enter the Tunnel.

6. Ruins conservation workshop?

In the Norwegian 2009 Nokalakevi mission report, the ruins conservation challenges were described (page 12-13), and it was recommended to arrange a workshop for Georgian and Norwegian masons. The ruin of the Royal Bath was found to be a suitable monument for a joint workshop (page 20-21). The workshop participants agreed that this ruin should be a priority for conservation, and the 2009 recommendation can be confirmed.



The Royal Bath has large conservation challenges.

For practical reasons it is doubtful if this workshop can be arranged before early autumn 2011; September is considered suitable. A precondition for a successful and effective workshop is that plans for necessary equipment and preparatory work are made well beforehand, preferably through a preparatory joint mission in April/May.

7. Visit to other sites and museums

7.1. Chchorotsku, Nokalakevi Museum-Reserve

Chchorotsku, which is the name both of the municipality and the municipality centre, is c. 45 km north-east of Nokalakevi and belongs to the Mengrelia and Upper Svaneti Region. The

cultural heritage sites and the local museum are organized under the Nokalakevi Museum-Reserve, which is large, approximately 20.000 km².

We visited the Khomakirde ruined fortress, which constitutes one of the seven elements in a territorial signalling system. Nokalakevi is another and the system's focal point, and the air distance between the two is only 10 km. Quick information and warning could be exchanged between Khomakirde and Nokalakevi – after fire had been successively lit at the five “stations” in-between.



*Left: View from Khomakirde fortress towards Abkhazia.
Right: Very little is preserved of the Fortress today.*

The Chchorotsku local museum houses important and interesting artefacts from all periods, including ethnological items. The entire museum is, however, worn down and in need of extensive repair, which is prioritized.



Director Guram Malania showed us around in Chchorotsku Museum.

7.2. Samtavro and Bagineti, Great Mtskheta Museum-Reserve

Mtskheta, situated about 25 km south-west of Tbilisi, houses a number of cultural heritage sites, complexes and monuments in a beautiful and historically important environment. In *Samtavro Valley*, close to Mtskheta Museum, there is a large burial ground where so far about 400 stone cists are excavated, dating from the 2. Mill. BC to 8-9th CC. AD. The settlement site close by, dates to 8-7th CC. BC. An educational unit is set up, covered by an open protective

roof structure near the cemetery and the settlement site. The unit consists of a large work table and five sandboxes with reconstructed graves, similar to some which have been excavated: in each a plastic skeleton equipped with copies of artefacts. Here school children are invited to become archaeologists for a few hours (see chapter 3 above, D. Cheishvili's presentation "Educational archaeological program for school children in Samtavro Archaeological Valley, Great Mtskheta Museum-Reserve"). The Norwegian advisers were extremely impressed with this initiative, and will make sure relevant Norwegian museums learn about this way of educating school children.



"Young archaeologists", school program in Samtavro.

The fortified *Bagineti Acropolis* was the royal residence of the rulers of Iberia (Kartli) between 3rd. C. BC and 8th C. AD. It consists of a number of buildings and rooms, now in ruins. During our visit, work was ongoing on the establishment of walkways. The walkway route was sensibly made according to the landscape and the monuments to be presented. However, the flat walkway stones were unnecessarily set in cement which already showed signs of cracking; sand would have worked better. Also, the walkways were elevated from the ground, instead of levelled with the ground surface which would have been a better and more stable solution. Furthermore, the walkways, approximately 60 cm wide, could with advantage have been 20 - 30 cm wider. Following our advice, work on the remaking of the walkways started immediately after our visit. Judging from photos sent to us, the result is excellent.



*Left: Part of the new walkways at Bagineti Acropolis, Mtskheta, as it was 17 November 2010.
Right: Following our careful advice, work quickly started on the remaking of the walkways. Photo:
G. Melikishvili*



The walkways are now wider, the walkway slabs are shallowly sunk into the ground and the space between them are filled with sand. The result looks excellent. Photo: G. Melikishvili

Masons were at work at one of the monuments, conserving the ruined walls using lime mortar. The results looked very good, and the only comment is that the wall top surfaces had small depressions which will collect water. If the protective roof is to remain, this is no problem. For future wall top conservation it is recommended to make sure that water will find “paths” off the wall tops.



Masonry work at one of the ruins at Bagineti Acropolis. Only lime mortar is now applied.

The Museum entrance area is recently remodelled and was extremely welcoming. High quality copies of artefacts and other “meaningful” souvenirs were for sale. The Museum exhibits a number of interesting and beautiful artefacts and is under rehabilitation.



There are large and informative information boards by the entrance to Mtskheta museum.

8. Recommendations

The recommendations in chapters 8.1-3 were developed jointly by the Georgian and Norwegian workshop participants, and mirror the issues of both parties.

8.1. General recommendations

- In all on-site measures and activities the international principles concerning sustainability, authenticity, integrity and minimum physical and visual intervention must be followed.
- In the course of ruins conservation, remove all cement after documentation (wall tops and joints) and replace it with suitable lime mortar.
- To remove the asphalt surface of the road through the Monument and replace it with a compacted gravel surface.
- To establish minimum intervention walkways to the individual monuments to be presented to visitors and to use compacted gravel as walkway surface. The walkways should be approximately 110 cm wide to accommodate wheelchairs.
- To avoid signposts (“banners”) within the Monument area and instead apply the method of numbered stations followed up with information in a leaflet and a guide book with map. Information signposts should be restricted to the outside of the Fortress Walls.
- Through effective on-site sign symbols and other information, prevent visitors from climbing the ruin walls and emphasize that this is strictly forbidden. Visitors must keep to the walkways.
- To keep the vegetation under control: on the ruins, along the ruin walls and in the area in general.

- To safeguard dangerous areas by the walkway along the river towards the Tunnel entrance.
- To always keep the whole area clean of garbage through daily monitoring and maintenance routines.

8.2. Recommendations to the Georgian central and local authorities

- For the Central and Local Governments to allocate funds for the development of Nokalakevi.
- Allocate funds to buy out private owners of the two private houses within the protected area.
- To sign a memorandum between the National Agency and the National Museum regarding cooperation between the Nokalakevi Archaeological Museum and the Nokalakevi Archaeological Expedition.
- Further training of Georgian personnel in site conservation and management.
- For the Ministry of Regional Infrastructural Development to plan and allocate funds for improvement of central and regional roads to Nokalakevi, including a parking lot by the entrance to the Monument.
- For the Tourist Agency to consult and agree with the National Agency on plans and projects directed towards sustainable tourist development of Nokalakevi.
- Increase salaries to Museum-Reserve staff in order to keep and recruit stable and qualified personnel.
- Seek international involvement and participation in archaeological expeditions to Nokalakevi.
- To use the Nokalakevi archives as a pilot in the development and establishment of a National Cultural Heritage Database.
- To the Georgian Ministry of the Environment Protection and National Resources to provide expertise concerning vegetation control and management in Nokalakevi and to initiate measures and a maintenance program for continuous vegetation management and monitoring.

8.3. Recommendations to Riksantikvaren

- Cooperate with the National Agency to organize and conduct a ruins conservation workshop for masons with Georgian and Norwegian participation.
- After a first workshop for masons in ruins conservation, to continue Norwegian support in the training and following up of conservation and safeguarding the Nokalakevi ruins.
- Further extend the program for development of proficiency in ruins conservation to the other Museum-Reserves in Georgia.
- Involve Norwegian advisers in the development of museum educational tools, methods and measures (development of museum exhibitions, pedagogical information texts, school programs, etc).
- To continue to support the management, preservation and presentation of Nokalakevi, and the further development of the Nokalakevi Management Plan.
- To support with expertise to evaluate and further advise in the practical implementation and following up of the infrastructure development of and measures in Nokalakevi.
- To make expertise and support available to rehabilitate the 19th C. Wooden Building between the Fortress Walls and the Nokalakevi Museum and to develop it into an information centre with café and school education space.