6

RETHINKING 'OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE' AT URBAN WORLD HERITAGE SITES

Who is this toolkit for?

- Heritage and urban planning professionals
- Municipalities
- NGOs interested in heritage, historic environment, communities and urban development
- Civil society stakeholders (neighbourhood and residents' associations)
- State / ministry officials

This is one of six toolkits to help you to develop innovative ways of:

- **Valorising** the past in the present
- **Engaging** and working with communities
- **Recognising** the different meanings of heritage and narratives of about places and their pasts
- **Presenting** heritage to local and non-local audiences
- **Building** social cohesion, peaceful communities and heritage tourism

Why is this important?

Drafting a Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (SOUV) for a potential World Heritage Site forms the essential part of a nomination, and should ideally convince the World Heritage Committee about why the site in question should be inscribed in the World Heritage List (WHL). At the same time, as the concept of heritage has expanded in recent years to give more emphasis to intangible aspects of heritage and local communities' narratives on heritage, there is a need to re-think the concept of Outstanding Universal Value and re-evaluate the SOUV for certain sites.

This toolkit will guide readers towards a successful and - most importantly - participative process of formulating a Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (SOUV) for the nomination of a potential WHS. Based on the findings of our 'Plural Heritages of Istanbul – The Case of the Land Walls' project, it will also provide a discussion on the concept of 'Outstanding Universal Value' (OUV). You may also consult the World Heritage Convention, the UNESCO Operational Guidelines and guidebooks published by the UNESCO and its advisory bodies listed at the end of this toolkit.

In our case study of the Land Walls of Istanbul we also show how a SOUV can be rethought to incorporate new layers of social history. This can significantly change the way we value heritage, enriching our understandings of the different 'lives' of a site, while including community perspectives in order to present more plural, inclusive and human stories. Ultimately, this may lead to positive changes in how we manage, interpret and present sites to publics, as well as fostering greater senses of pride and involvement in heritage at community levels.

(Previous spread)
Vegetable gardens or bostans along the Land Walls

(Previous page)
Participants in their antique shop

UNESCO World Heritage Convention (1972). http://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/

UNESCO (2017). Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (WHC.17/01 12 July 2017)

whc.unesco.org/en/guidelines/

The World Heritage Convention

All nation states around the globe host a wealth of cultural and natural heritage, tangible and intangible. However, only a very small percentage of heritage may be so exceptional and irreplaceable as to be of universal significance. Therefore, UNESCO considers that its loss through deterioration or destruction may constitute an impoverishment of the heritage for all humanity. Such exceptional heritage assets should be considered to be of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) and require special protection and proper management against various forms of threat, such as nearby urban development, pollution, poor visitor management, destruction due to conflict, and the effects of climate change.

In order to ensure the proper identification, conservation, management and presentation of universally significant cultural and natural heritage 'the Convention concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage' (WHC) was adopted by the General Conference of the UNESCO on the 16th of November 1972. The Convention's implementing mechanism is the World Heritage List, which allows state parties to identify heritage sites of OUV and have them listed as World Heritage.

The WHC is the only global conservation mechanism, and by signing it State Parties commit to participate in an international community of concern for universal sites of cultural and natural significance, and their proper conservation for present and future generations. As of October 2018, 1092 properties in a total of 167 countries were listed as World Heritage. Of these 845 are cultural, 209 are natural and 38 are mixed (both cultural and natural) sites.

From Identification to Inscription

The process from the identification of a potential site to its inscription as World Heritage may take several years. State parties can only nominate sites listed in the 'Tentative List' to be considered as World Heritage. Therefore, the WHC encourages state parties to put together just such a 'Tentative List': an inventory of all sites regarded as having OUV to be later nominated as World Heritage. An application for a site to be included in the Tentative List should contain details about why it is regarded to have Outstanding Universal Value, and strategies to ensure its proper conservation and management. Depending on their readiness in terms of conservation and management, which means having a management plan put in place, sites are nominated to become World Heritage.

The WHC encourages state parties to ensure the participation of a wide range of stakeholders such as site managers, local and regional governments, local communities, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), universities and other interested parties and partners in all stages of the process, from the identification and nomination of sites to the conservation and management of World Heritage Sites. During identification and nomination, participation ensures that all heritage values are taken into account. During conservation and management it ensures a more responsive and 'bottom-up' management practice.

Three Advisory Bodies, the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) evaluate cultural and natural sites for their OUV, 'authenticity' and 'integrity'. The World Heritage Committee, which consists of representatives from 21 of the State Parties to the Convention makes ultimate decisions regarding the inscription of sites on the World Heritage List during annual meetings.

Defining World Heritage

Since the WHL is more about tangible "properties", 'cultural heritage' is defined as follows:

- Monuments: architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and combinations of features, which are of Outstanding Universal Value from the point of view of history, art or science

- Groups of buildings: groups of separate or connected buildings which, because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape, are of Outstanding Universal Value from the point of view of history, art or science

- Sites: works of man or the combined works of nature and of man, and areas including archaeological sites which are of Outstanding Universal Value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological points of view.

According to the WHC "natural heritage" constitutes:

- Natural features consisting of physical and biological formations or groups of such formations, which are of Outstanding Universal Value from the aesthetic or scientific point of view

- Geological and physiographical formations and precisely delineated areas which constitute the habitat of threatened species of animals and plants of Outstanding Universal Value from the point of view of science or conservation

- Natural sites or precisely delineated natural areas of Outstanding Universal Value from the point of view of science, conservation or natural beauty

"Mixed sites" sites satisfy a part or the whole of the definitions of both cultural and natural heritage laid out above. In addition to these definitions, the WHC has identified and defined several other categories such as 'cultural landscapes', 'historic towns and town centers', 'heritage canals', and 'heritage routes'. Among these, we would like to place more emphasis here on 'cultural landscapes' as this concept may help us to describe urban sites such as our case study – the Land Walls of Istanbul and their multi-layered surrounding heritage.

Cultural landscapes are defined by the WHC as "cultural properties, which represent the combined works of nature and of man". They often reflect specific techniques of sustainable land-use, considering the characteristics and limits of the natural environment they are established in, and a specific spiritual relation to nature. The cultural landscape concept provides a more comprehensive approach to heritage valorisation as it embraces the interaction of tangible and intangible aspects in the formation of heritage values.

Key concepts

Outstanding Universal Value (OUV)

In order for a heritage value to be inscribed in the WHL it should demonstrate what its OUV is. Therefore, state parties need to draft a SOUV for sites they would like to nominate for the WHL. The WHC defines OUV as "cultural and/ or natural significance, so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity. As such, the permanent protection of this heritage is of the highest importance to the international community as a whole." The Statement of Outstanding Universal Value of any nominated site therefore serves as a key reference for its effective protection and management.

World Heritage Criteria

There are ten criteria for World Heritage inscription identified in the Operational Guidelines. Criteria (i) to (vi) relate to cultural properties, and are therefore assessed by ICOMOS, and the remaining criteria (vii) to (x) relate to natural properties and are assessed by IUCN. While many properties may only meet some natural or cultural criteria, mixed properties will meet some natural as well as some cultural criteria. Nominations of mixed properties are evaluated by both IUCN and ICOMOS. A heritage asset can be regarded to have Outstanding Universal Value if it fits into at least one of the below listed set of criteria:

(i).   Represent a masterpiece of human creative genius

(ii).   Exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design

(iii). Bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared

(iv). Be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history

(v).   Be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change

(vi). Be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance

(vii). Contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance

(viii).Be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features

(ix). Be outstanding examples representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals

(x). Contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of Outstanding Universal Value from the point of view of science or conservation.

In addition to the total of ten criteria, natural and cultural sites must also meet the conditions of authenticity and/or integrity and must have an adequate protection and management system to ensure they retain their OUV.

Authenticity

For sites to be regarded as authentic, the WHC requires that their cultural values are truthfully and credibly expressed through a variety of attributes listed below. Identifying attributes associated with a site is another important aspect of the formulation of the SOUV. Attributes can be tangible or intangible, and need to flow from the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value and the justification for the criteria. They must be identified in order to understand authenticity and integrity, and are the focus of protection, conservation and management.

- form and design
- materials and substance
- use and function
- traditions, techniques and management systems
- location and setting
- language, and other forms of intangible heritage
- spirit and feeling
- other internal and external factors

Integrity

Integrity is a measure of the wholeness and intactness of the natural and/or cultural heritage and its attributes. Examining the conditions of integrity, therefore requires assessing the extent to which the site:

1. includes all elements necessary to express its Outstanding Universal Value;
2. is of adequate size to ensure the complete representation of the features and processes which convey the property's significance;
3. suffers from adverse effects of development and/or neglect.

The concepts and definitions discussed in this toolkit have been criticised and are, on occasion, reviewed and redrafted. For example, the ideas of 'universalism', 'integrity' and 'authenticity' have been explored and debated at length (for example by Jukka Jokilehto), and the history and philosophy of UNESCO's engagement has been examined in Heritage Studies literature (e.g. Meskell 2018). All heritage actors – including readers of this toolkit – will benefit from thinking critically and politically about the concepts and definitions discussed here, and, if time permits, from further reading. Nevertheless, the UNESCO processes, concepts and approaches relating to heritage are dominant features of the heritage management at the global level.

Jokilehto, J. (2006). Considerations on authenticity and integrity in world heritage context. *City & Time 2* (1): 1. http://www.ct.ceci-br.org

Meskell, L. (2018). A Future in Ruins: UNESCO, World Heritage, and the Dream of Peace, Oxford University Press

World Heritage and Intangible Cultural Heritage

The majority of sites listed under criterion (vi) constitute religious and spiritual sites such as the Tombs of the Buganda Kings at Kasubi (Uganda) for traditional belief systems; the Borobudur Temple (Indonesia) as an exemplary Buddhist site; the City of Rome (Italy), the Vatican City (Holy See), the Routes of Santiago de Compostela (France/Spain), and several monastic complexes as Christian sites; and Kairouan (Tunisia), Lamu (Kenya), and the Old City of Sana'a (Yemen) as Islamic sites. The Old City of Jerusalem is relevant to three major religions. Other sites with a significant intangible cultural heritage aspect include sites known for musical traditions, sites associated with a significant historical figure, or sites known for their wine-producing traditions, among many other similar traditions (ICOMOS, 2008).

The Compendium on Standards for the Inscription of Cultural Properties to the World Heritage List is a very useful guide for World Heritage nominations and can be accessed here:

http://whc.unesco.org/archive/2008/whc08-32com-9e.pdf

The UNESCO defines intangible cultural heritage "traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts."

As mentioned, the WHL's cultural sites are primarily listed for their tangible OUV. Intangible cultural heritage aspects as described in the definition above are not listed in the WHL. However, efforts to safeguard intangible cultural heritage at the global scale were initiated in 2003 with the signing of the 'Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage'. Sites listed in the WHL may have direct or tangible associations with intangible aspects. For example, a belief system of OUV may be directly or tangibly reflected in a site, but it should be noted that a site must be an outstanding example of direct or tangible associations.

Most of the WHL's criteria involve intangible associations. That is, most sites listed are associated with significant historical events, political leaders, creative figures, wars and conflict, or ideas in town planning or structural innovations. They are tangible manifestations of these associations. The sixth criterion, however, relates to associations that may not have a tangible impact within the property, but nevertheless can be clearly and directly demonstrated. For example, a mountain or landscape may be sacred or inspirational; a site may have inspired painters, artists or musicians; or the site may be associated with some sort of event that is itself of outstanding importance.

Because the WHC is primarily about tangible "properties", the physical aspects of the site need to be of Outstanding Universal Value. If a site has outstanding intangible cultural heritage, adoption of the WHC tends to mean that the ICH comes to be associated with the physical attributes, whether through use of other criteria to support inscription, or if used alone, through intrinsic links of the identified associations to physical fabric.

Participative Formulation of the SOUV for Nomination

The nomination process of a site may be divided into at least two stages. The first stage involves identifying the potential OUV of the property; the second stage will ensure that this is justified through a comparative analysis; and the third stage could make sure that adequate protection, conservation and management is provided. The focus of this toolkit however is on identifying the potential OUV of a site and rethinking the OUV of an already inscribed site.

The most significant and perhaps most difficult part of the nomination process is the formulation of the SOUV for a potential WHS, as it contains the justification of why the site should be included in the WHL. UNESCO requires a team approach for the successful implementation and management of the process, as it involves the close collaboration of key stakeholders and different experts. There is no ideal team structure or method for producing a successful nomination, but in the box below there are some tips for structuring a team.

The nomination process requires the property to be considered from many different standpoints, such as science, history, archaeology, landscape, conservation, management, social structures, tourism, planning, business, development and regulation. UNESCO therefore recommends the establishment of a specialist technical or scientific group to support the development of the SOUV within the nomination team.

Once a small core team has been established, it may be helpful to start by asking these questions (UNESCO, 2011):

- Is existing research relevant to the nomination adequate? Or is more research needed to articulate the values and to understand the global and cultural contexts of the property's history and attributes?
- What inventories documenting the property exist, and is further work needed to complete or update them?
- Referring to the many categories of information required in the nomination format (such as oral histories, published archaeological evidence, conservation history, tourism data, planning regulations), what material exists to be able to complete the nomination and what more might be needed?
- Who needs to be involved in the nomination, including people who live in or around, and/or have direct relationships with the property?
- What are the social, economic and political realities of the property?

A successful nomination requires the involvement of all relevant stakeholders from the very beginning of the process all the way through to preparation of a nomination. This ensures that all heritage values are considered and all potential conservation and management issues addressed. The involvement of all relevant stakeholders and the local community should also continue after the nomination as well, as part of the ongoing management of the property.

Finally, the nomination team and process will need adequate resources and funding to support the work. Early in the process, the level of resources and funding should be estimated, and sources identified and confirmed to provide this support.

Setting up a nomination team

1.Compile a list of key stakeholders (e.g. site owner/manager, state officials, national heritage agencies, local authorities, local communities, tourism operators, universities, and experts)

2. Check that the range of knowledge and expertise within the team reflects the range of values, ideally have some understanding of the property in an international context, and have useful networks for obtaining wider advice.

3. Be flexible about team membership to take account of the possibility of emerging interests, however it is preferable to retain a continuing editor

4. Consider creating a small core team to work on the nomination itself, and a larger reference group to support the work

5. Ensure that the team is clearly led, has the right membership, has a clear task, and has a clear and realistic work plan with milestones.
Source: UNESCO (2011)

You can find more detailed information on preparing a nomination dossier Preparing World Heritage Nominations published in 2011.

Drafting the SOUV for a potential site

Understanding the site

A SOUV encapsulates the whole rationale for the nomination and proposed inscription. A good knowledge and understanding of a site in question and its condition are essential to identifying its potential Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) and the attributes that convey this value. It is generally helpful to structure this process initially to bring out as far as possible all the values of the site, with a view to establishing which of these might provide the basis for supporting a World Heritage nomination.

Identifying and defining values is a mixture of knowledge and methodology. The identification of the meaning and relative value of a cultural property should start with the identification of the themes, then proceed to the chronological-regional assessment, and finally define the typology to be proposed, whether for a monument, a group of buildings, or a site. In addition to an assessment of cultural values, Outstanding Universal Value also includes tests relating to integrity and authenticity, protection and management (UNESCO, 2011).

Once values have been identified they need to be articulated in a relatively short text, which will form part of the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value for the nomination. This text should be a brief synthesis that includes:

* A description of the property and what it consists of, that is its character and especially for cultural properties, its meaning and stories associated with it;
* why the property could be considered to be of potential Outstanding Universal Value;
* a summary of the attributes that convey the potential Outstanding Universal Value of the property.

While the focus of the nomination will be on the site's OUV, they will have local and national values as well. These values should also be understood as these as well as other values constitute the natural and cultural richness of the site. In order to understand local values it is necessary to consult local people, as they are a primary source of information about local values.

Identifying appropriate criteria

The SOUV of a potential WHS should clearly demonstrate why the site justifies each criterion chosen. There should be a clear and logical connection between the SOUV and the criteria selected. It is therefore important that the research conducted for a site in question supports the criteria chosen as appropriate. While one criterion is regarded sufficient for World Heritage status, as we have mentioned above, criteria (vi) should be preferably used with others (UNESCO, 2011).

Rethinking Outstanding Universal Value

Over the last decade or so there has been increased awareness among the heritage community of the bias towards grandiose, monumental or aesthetically pleasing buildings and sites. This traditional Western approach to cultural heritage management has put such sites hierarchically above tangible or intangible cultural heritage assets belonging to 'lower' classes or indigenous communities.

It was the Australian archaeologist Laurajane Smith, who had first brought forward this quite dominant approach. Smith argued that this phenomenon was a result of the 'authorized heritage discourse' (AHD) prevalent within the heritage community. The AHD provides a shallow and limited framework for what constitutes cultural heritage, as it neglects the expression of a diverse set of cultural and social values and narratives of various communities that partake in the life of the heritage in question. You can read more about this in toolkit 2.

As the leading global conservation organization, UNESCO has been criticized for having a significant influence on the way conservation practice has been carried out, because of its separate conservation mechanisms for tangible and intangible cultural heritage. This approach – directed through conventions and declarations - has further strengthened the emphasis on built or monumental cultural heritage, as opposed to a more unifying approach to heritage. A unifying approach to heritage regards the separation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage as artificial, since - in a way - tangible cultural heritage assets are the material manifestations of intangible heritage.

Another impact of AHD on heritage practices has been that practices such as the identification, management and interpretation of cultural heritage have for the most part been in the hands of experts, with local communities remaining largely left out from these processes. This may eventually negatively affect the quality of conservation and management of cultural heritage, and therefore the way people experience cultural heritage.

Therefore, the challenge has been to involve diverse stakeholders and particularly communities in all heritage practices, from the identification to the interpretation of heritage values, thereby pluralizing the heritage discourse. The Faro Convention on 'the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society' adopted in 2005 by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, constitutes an important instrument in the attempt to pluralize heritage discourses.

The Convention argues that "objects and places are not, in themselves, what is important about the cultural heritage. They are important because of the meanings and uses that people attach to them and the values they represent." It has therefore become a necessity for governments and heritage professionals to find ways of working with society to revalorise heritage. The revalorisation of heritage with society helps it find itself in all its diversity, reflected in the heritage discourse. This, no doubt, contributes to the overall democratization of societies and to the sustainable conservation of heritage values through involvement and engagement by the society (EC, 2005).

In the light of these developments towards the adoption of more plural approaches to heritage practices, it is strongly advised that future nominations of WHS adopt these approaches from the very beginning of the process. It may also be necessary
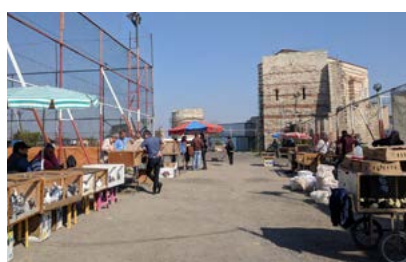
Why revise an SOUV?

Many SOUVs were written some time ago, before the advent of ideas relating to the multiple histories and communities implicated in a site. The result is that sometimes the SOUV may limit the significance and value of a site that could instead be capable of telling richer, more engaging, more human and more multi-layered stories. This has the double benefit of binding together community perspectives and official heritage practice and fulfilling the spirit of UNESCO's interest in humanity.

[Image 3] Pigeon market at Land Walls of Istanbul

[Image 4] Cultural probe

to focus on sites already included in the WHL and their SOUV. For certain WHS it may be the case that, as a result of the influence of the AHD, certain intangible aspects associated with these sites that also bear OUV may have been left out.

In the case of our Land Walls project, our research and findings indicated that it would be for the benefit of the future conservation and management of the area to rethink and re-evaluate the WHS's SOUV, which was put together by heritage authorities (experts) in the 1980s. Revisions to OUV and criteria are possible. However, according to the Operational Guidelines, this process requires the state party to prepare and submit a new nomination dossier to the World Heritage Centre (UNESCO, 2017).

The Case of the Land Walls of Istanbul WHS

The purpose of our Land Walls project was to re-valorise and re-interpret heritage along 'The Land Walls of Istanbul WHS' by working with community members in order to obtain a more pluralistic and encompassing perspective on the Walls and their surrounding heritage. While conducting the research phase of our project, we started by doing walking ethnographies in neighbourhoods along the Land Walls. 'Walking ethnographies' are based on the idea that those who have been living in an area for years will have an in-depth understanding of it. This understanding may differ from the conventional expert perspectives that contribute to AHD.

The next step of our project was to 'probe' participants for any stories, memories or thoughts related to the Walls that they might have left out during the walking ethnographies. For this we designed a variety of 'cultural probes' which would playfully invite participants to share any such stories, memories or thoughts. Our objectives for using cultural probes were to learn about the participants, their outlook towards others, on heritage (broadly understood as the valorisation of the past in the present, contested or uncontested); and on the walls. You can find more detailed information about these methods in our toolkits 3 and 4.

After completing the research phase, we moved on to conduct the interpretive phase of the project, during which we worked together with participants (residents of neighbourhoods along the Walls) to co-produce videos and catch their heritage perspectives by organizing a photography workshop. You can find more detailed information about community co-production methods of heritage interpretation in toolkit 4.

This kind of co-produced material can be used in different ways for the interpretation of heritage. In the case of our Land Walls project, we produced a mobile application for visitors who would like to learn about the 'plural' aspects of heritage along the Land Walls. We have uploaded short segments of these videos on relevant points along walking routes. We have used photographs participants took during the photography workshop to create an online 'story map' on the areas they were taken. We have also added their thoughts and emotions for each photograph.

A case study: rethinking OUV for the Land Walls of Istanbul

The Land Walls of Istanbul are one of a total of four separate World Heritage Sites, which together constitute the "Historic Areas of Istanbul" UNESCO World Heritage Site. The WHS's OUV fulfils the first four criteria of the WHC, which are primarily about outstanding tangible, monumental or architectural aspects.

Below, we lay out relevant parts of the current SOUV of the WHS and criteria that point out the Land Walls' outstanding architectural aspects as a fifth-century CE defence structure of the Byzantine Empire:

The Outstanding Universal Value of Istanbul resides in its unique integration of architectural masterpieces that reflect the meeting of Europe and Asia over many centuries, and in its incomparable skyline formed by the creative genius of Byzantine and Ottoman architects.

'The Historic Areas of Istanbul' WHS was listed under the first four criteria, which are all related to tangible aspects of cultural heritage. The Land Walls' justification for criteria (ii), which addresses influences between cultures, is articulated as follows:

Throughout history the monuments in Istanbul have exerted considerable influence on the development of architecture, monumental arts and the organization of space, both in Europe and the Near East. Thus, the 6,650 meter terrestrial wall of Theodosius II with its second line of defence, created in 447, was one of the leading references for military architecture; Hagia Sophia became a model for an entire family of churches and later mosques, and the mosaics of the palaces and churches of Constantinople influenced both Eastern and Western art.

In addition, the Land Walls are included in the justification for criteria (iii):

Istanbul bears unique testimony to the Byzantine and Ottoman civilizations through its large number of high quality examples of a great range of building types, some with associated artworks. They include fortifications, churches and palaces with mosaics and frescoes, monumental cisterns, tombs, mosques, religious schools and bath buildings...

Over the course of our Land Walls project, however, we collected substantial 'evidence' that suggests that the heritage associated with the Walls is much richer than reflected in the Statement of OUV for the 'Historic Areas of Istanbul' UNESCO WHS. Our findings indicate a wealth of intangible heritage aspects associated with the Walls that have been largely gone unnoticed at the official level.

For example, for most of their long history, the Land Walls of İstanbul served as a boundary marker for the city. They enclosed the city within, stretching from one end of the city territory at the Golden Horn down to the opposite end at the Marmara Sea shore, thereby defining the form of the ancient city of Constantinople. The Walls defined what belonged inside the city and what should remain outside. In time, it created an 'urban fringe' in its immediate vicinity, attracting all those functions deemed unsuitable for core areas of the

[Image 5] Land Walls of Istanbul

city. Because of its particular construction history and its location far from the city centre, some of the Byzantine monasteries that were set up in more distant areas of the city territory found themselves enclosed by the Walls. Also, part of the agricultural land that surrounded ancient Constantinople became an inner-city phenomenon once the Land Walls incorporated them. The management approach that was put into effect regarding the upkeep of the Walls introduced a new function - the vegetable gardens - integral to the physical structure of the Land Walls. Landowners were allowed to keep working on the lands and use parts of the Walls for storage, provided that they would relinquish their use in times of military need. This system led, in time, to the emergence of a unique system of urban vegetable gardens - bostans - that continue to exist, albeit in much-reduced form, to this day. All of these features of the Land Walls have prompted us to re-evaluate their officially sanctioned heritage values as mainly an architectural monument, also taking into account the social, physical and cultural dynamics that it sets into motion.

In the case of the Land Walls, a revalorisation of heritage would mean incorporating the value of the 'bostans' along the Walls, the multicultural communities that inhabited the area for centuries with their diverse practices of religion and cultural rites, the value of specialised hospitals, tanneries, entertainment houses and corollary labour and leisure practices and customs. This kind of revalorisation process reveals different connections, experiences and narratives that the inhabitants and the physical artefacts 'narrate', providing insights into their past and their connection to the area and to the history of the site itself.

[Image 6] Bostans along the Walls

Incorporating these intangible aspects associated with the Land Walls to their current tangible descriptions provides a much richer, multi-layered picture of the cultural heritage values along the Walls. Furthermore, adopting a more plural perspective on the Walls enriches and pluralizes their tangible characteristics and their historic significance. All these tangible and intangible aspects prompt us to regard the Land Walls and its immediate surroundings as a much more interesting, multi-layered cultural landscape.

Adopting a more plural perspective may also contribute to a more successful conservation of the Walls and their immediate surroundings. The area has undergone significant transformation over the recent decades. As factories shut down or moved to other parts of the city and certain political events caused many of the various ethnic groups to move elsewhere in Istanbul or Turkey, or indeed abroad, areas along the Walls started to experience significant decline and poverty. The loss of a significant portion of the multicultural fabric has meant a loss of many intangible aspects once present in the area such as festivals, rituals, certain professions, and the entertainment culture. Furthermore, new development projects, such as 'gated' housing projects implemented in recent years have exacerbated loss, as many areas of centuries-old bostans were sacrificed for new development. The findings from the cultural methods as well as the co-production activities we conducted with residents of the neighbourhoods along the Walls have revealed how important it is to reflect local communities' narratives and experiences of loss. This is because it helps us to become more aware about the magnitude and speed of change happening in the area and to formulate better conservation strategies.

The revalorisation processes we have implemented as part of our project therefore points to the need to re-evaluate the current SOUV for its heritage values and criteria. For this purpose, our project team conducted meetings with local government officials of Istanbul responsible for the conservation of the Historic Areas of Istanbul WHS and its management. During these meetings, we explained the various steps of our project and suggested a revision of the current SOUV, as well as the addition of criterion (v), because of the way communities have for centuries interacted with their environment – for example in the form of vegetable gardening along the Land Walls - in quite unique ways. In addition, the multicultural nature of communities and how they interacted for centuries may constitute justification under criteria (vi).

The key aspect of criterion (v) is 'land-use'. There must be some reasonably long period of time associated with the settlement or use in order for it to be considered traditional. The settlement or use must also be an outstanding representation of a culture or human interaction with the environment. That is, the settlement or use must be important within the life of the culture, or the human interaction must have universal relevance (UNESCO, 2011). Criterion (vi) has the strongest association with intangible cultural heritage as discussed earlier. Furthermore, as the Land Walls area could be described as a 'multi-layered cultural landscape', a relevant revision to the status of the WHS could be considered (suggested new title: "The Land Walls of Istanbul Multi-layered Cultural Landscape").

The key messages from this toolkit are:

- Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) is the main focus of a site's nomination; it is what is evaluated; it is why a property is inscribed on the World Heritage List; and it is what needs to be sustained through protection, conservation and management.

- The participation of a wide range of stakeholders in all stages of the process, from the identification and nomination of sites to the conservation and management of World Heritage sites, is essential to address all values associated with a site and the development of successful conservation and management strategies.

- Cultural heritage is not primarily about tangible cultural heritage such as monuments, buildings and sites. Intangible associations of sites should be equally considered during World Heritage nominations.

- The revalorization of heritage sites should involve working with local communities in order to capture their narratives, memories and experiences about the places they have lived for certain periods of time, and provide more 'plural' perspectives of heritage for sites.

www.pluralheritages.ncl.ac.uk

Toolkit 1: Different Experiences of Places and Pasts
Christopher Whitehead

Toolkit 2: Working with Communities to Revalorise Heritage
Christopher Whitehead
Gönül Bozoğlu

Toolkit 3: Creating Memory Maps
Tom Schofield
Gönül Bozoğlu
Figen Kıvılcım Çorakbaş

Toolkit 4: Community Co-production
Tom Schofield
Christopher Whitehead

Toolkit 5: Understanding and Documenting Intangible Cultural Qualities of Urban Heritage
Figen Kıvılcım Çorakbaş
Zeynep Kunt
Elif Acar Bilgin

Toolkit 6: Rethinking 'Outstanding Universal Value' at Urban World Heritage Sites
Ayşegül Yılmaz
Asu Aksoy
Christopher Whitehead

Arts & Humanities Research Council

Newcastle University

İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi
LAUREATE INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITIES

BURSA ULUDAĞ ÜNİVERSİTESİ 1975