Analysis of Master Plan for the World Heritage Sites in Thailand: A Documentary Research

การวิเคราะห์แผนแม่บทของแหล่งมรดกโลกในประเทศไทย: การวิจัยเชิงเอกสาร

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Abstract

The paper is a discussion of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization—UNESCO cultural sites in Thailand (focusing on Sukhothai, and Ayutthaya), based both on their historical and tourism master plans. Applying textual analysis methodology to those documents, they demonstrate how historical and cultural events determined heritage policies during early 1960s up to now. Those policies also shaped in the Heritage and Tourism master plans of those sites, which lead to gentrification of the heritage, the actual Heritagescape, as well as an educational perspective of the heritage sites. But the Heritagescape and tourism enhancement should not have been the main aims for the registration to the World Heritage list, but protection of the heritage sites for future generations.

Keywords: Thailand; UNESCO heritage sites; heritage management.

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บทคัดย่อ

บทความนี้เป็นการศึกษาวิจัยในประเด็นมรดกทางวัฒนธรรมของประเทศไทยที่ได้ขึ้นทะเบียนไว้กับองค์การศึกษาวิทยาศาสตร์และวัฒนธรรมแห่งสหประชาชาติ (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) หรือ องค์การยูเนสโก (UNESCO) โดยมุ่งศึกษาในเขตพื้นที่ จังหวัดสุโขทัยและพระนครศรีอยุธยา เนื่องจากทั้งสองพื้นที่ได้รับการประกาศเป็นมรดกโลก รวมทั้งยังมีแผนแม่บทเพื่อดำเนินการพัฒนาโครงการอุทยานประวัติศาสตร์และการท่องเที่ยว สำหรับการดำเนินการศึกษานี้ ผู้วิจัยได้นำวิธีการวิเคราะห์ทางเอกสารที่มีประเด็นเกี่ยวข้องกับข้ออภิปรายถึงสถานการณ์ทางประวัติศาสตร์และวัฒนธรรมและมีส่วนในการกำหนดนโยบายในเรื่องมรดกทางวัฒนธรรมของไทยในช่วงต้นทศวรรษ 1960 จนถึงปัจจุบัน ทั้งนี้ การขึ้นทะเบียนเป็นมรดกโลกดังกล่าวมีส่วนสำคัญในการกำหนดกรอบแผนแม่บทเพื่อการพัฒนามรดกทางวัฒนธรรมและแหล่งท่องเที่ยวของสถานที่เหล่านั้นด้วย โดยการกำหนดแผนแม่บทนี้ ได้นำไปสู่การเปลี่ยนแปลงในแหล่งมรดกจากการเข้ามาของผู้อาศัยและธุรกิจใหม่มากกว่าผู้อาศัยหรือธุรกิจดั้งเดิม (Gentrification) รวมถึงทำให้การตีความและอธิบายคุณค่าของมรดกโลกดังกล่าวเปลี่ยนไป (heritagescape) และมุมมองทางการศึกษาของแหล่งมรดกยังได้เปลี่ยนไปด้วย ซึ่งการผลักดันให้แหล่งโบราณคดีขึ้นทะเบียนเป็นมรดกโลกนั้น ควรคำนึงถึงการคุ้มครองมรดกโลกไว้ให้คนรุ่นหลังเป็นเป้าหมายหลักในการขึ้นทะเบียนเป็นมรดกโลก มากกว่าเป็นไปเพื่อส่งเสริมการท่องเที่ยว

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Introduction

The relation between cultural heritage management, nation development and local stakeholders’ participation in Thailand is the scope of this paper. Dealing with cultural heritage management, the choice of Sukhothai with its satellite centres of Kampheng Phet and Sri Sitchanalai, Ayutthaya and Ban Chiang is dictated primarily by their being the only Thai cultural sites registered under UNESCO in 1991 and 1992. In fact, in order to register Sukhothai and Ayutthaya in the UNESCO World Heritage list, heritage management and tourism master plans were drawn during late 1980s and early 1990s. Looking at 30-year-old policies is not simply historical research, or at least, not only. In fact, heritage management in Thailand suffers of a general *déjà vu*: nation building in Thailand and heritage (*moradok*) are inseparable elements.

Along the persistence of long established guidelines of heritage management, Thai Authorised Heritage Discourse (AHD) (Smith, 2006) in Thailand in the late 1970s and early 1980s was shaped by more relevant cultural and historical events of the period under exam. As the analysis is about the three historical parks in Thailand, only Sukhothai and Ayutthaya had their master plans, both from Fine Arts Department (FAD) and Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT). For Sukhothai, the FAD master plan was issued in 1982 (Fine Arts Department, 1982), and the TAT master plan in 1984 (Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute, 1984). For Ayutthaya, the TAT master plan was formulated in 1988 (Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute, 1988) and the FAD master plan in 1992 with later revisions (Fine Arts Department, 1997). While for Sukhothai the responsibility and planning of FAD for conservation and restoration, and TAT for tourism planning are clearly identified in the contents of those masterplans, for Ayutthaya, the fact that TAT issued its master plan before FAD means that it contains a tourism master plan as majority, as well as a part relative to reconstruction of the major sites. For Ban Chiang no master plan was ever formulated, one of the many inconsistencies relative to the park itself. Even at the time of its registration in 1992, Ban Chiang had to be considered as sort of special case, as being mostly an archaeological trench, without any other visible elements: “Ban Chiang presents the World Heritage Committee with a challenge. Prehistoric monuments so far inscribed on the List cover upstanding remains (eg Stonehenge/ Avebury, Mesa Verde), rock art (eg Kakadu, Tassili n'Ajjer), and excavated settlements (eg Mohenjodaro). In the case of Ban Chiang, the material evidence is in the form of limited excavation trenches, the main body of cultural material being preserved

relatively intact beneath the modern village” (ICOMOS, 1992). It was registered under then criterion iii: “ to bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared”.

Therefore, this paper aims to two particular objectives:

1. First and foremost, is summarise the FAD and TAT Masterplans issued for the World Heritage sites of Sukhothai and Ayutthaya, noting in advance that Ban Chiang World Heritage site has not received any FAD or TAT masterplan.
2. The efficacy of those masterplans at the light of the documentation and comments of the last three decades, in a sort lesson learnt.

In order to achieve those objectives, a qualitative method approach will be pursued through textual analysis of documents (Flick, 2014, p. 357): “Documents in institutions are meant to record institutional routines and at the same time to record information necessary to legitimizing how things are done in such routiines. This becomes relevant in particular, when problems, failures, or mistakes have to be justified.” And ss it has been noted (Coffey, 2014, p. 369): “Documents are ‘social facts’, in that they are produced, shared and used in socially organized ways. They are versions of reality, scripted accord- ing to various kinds of convention, with a particular purpose in mind.”

Thus, the following pages work over two sets of readings: the first one is based on the documentation of Sukhothai and Ayutthaya master plans, as well as any later documents substantially confirming the continuity of those policies. As noted by United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) , tourism masterplans have to: “ Formulate a long- term development framework for tourism (10-20 years) with emphasis on policy and strategy, planning, institutional strengthening, legislation and regulation, product development and diversification, marketing and promotion, tourism infrastructure and superstructure, economic impact of tourism and tourism investment, human resource development, and socio- cultural and environmental impacts of tourism” (UNWTO, 2016). In this case, the master plans are simply studied over their text contents, as well as how those plans went to be applied on the terrain, in this case the historical parks later opened.

Reading through those texts, is the historical context during those texts were actually written

becomes important, as those heritage park master plans were conceived and written between 1970s and 1980s. At the time, Thailand was both experiencing the democratic overture between 1973 and 1976, as well as the Communist menace surrounded Thailand, thus, the political situation and other conflictual situations within view of heritage were factors dictating contents present in those master plans. As writing this research paper, some of the conclusions stated here were reached independently by Peleggi (2015). The paper here however proceeds in a different course and somehow complements and supplements the previous study, as an analysis of the documents is given in the following pages.

The Dimensions of Thai cultural heritage

Introducing Thai heritage require a division: for Timothy and Boyd (2003, p. 14), the scale of heritage can be classified into four different categories:

1. World sites, which are those registered in the UNESCO World Heritage List. To be noted that only individual countries nominate the sites to be inscribed and UNESCO only recognises the registration in the list, once all the preliminary criteria are satisfied (UNESCO World Heritage Committee, 1977). Sukhothai, Ayutthaya and Ban Chiang are the registered World Heritage sites, while the Khmer trail and its temples are still in the tentative list, which is a list of sites planned to be readied for the registration. As defined in the UNESCO website (http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/): States Parties are encouraged to submit their Tentative Lists, properties which they consider to be cultural and/or natural heritage of outstanding universal value and therefore suitable for inscription on the World Heritage List. States Parties are encouraged to prepare their Tentative Lists with the participation of a wide variety of stakeholders, including site managers, local and regional governments, local communities, NGOs and other interested parties and partners.
2. National sites, which have a special value for a nation, as they represent a particular cultural aspect. Phra Pathom Chedi in Nakhon Pathom, Grand Palace, Wat Pho in Bangkok are part of it. For Phra Pathom Chedi, the connection is with the origin of Buddhism in Thailand, as it is connected with the coming of the Buddhist missionaries sent by King Asoke of India, as well as the fact of being considered the earliest Buddhist temple of Thailand at least in the original version. Moreover, the temple has assumed a special value

in connection with the current royal family, as the future King Rama IV discovered the temple when he was still monk and the discovery of the temple. King Ram IV restored the temple, and King Rama V and King Rama VI made more restorationsn and embellishments to the temple. For Wat Phra Kaeo instead, being both a royal temple, whereas one of the most charismatic images of Buddhism belief, the Emerald Buddha, is actually kept, as well as having the King of Thailand as the main officiant are powerful symbols of national unity. As for Wat Pho, the reclining statue of Buddha is the biggest in Thailand, as well the temple is considered as the seat of medical knowledge in Thailand.

3. Local sites, as communities may have a special connection with a specific landmark or site. Chinatown and Pom Makahan communities in Bangkok can be considered as Thai examples. Both sites are in fact important for the communities living within its borders or even outside of it, as the former represent the usual seat of the original Chinese community emigrated in major cities in the world, and it is also a receptable of Chinese culture, food in particular. For the Mahahan Fort, whiel the community is now disappeared, its origins went back to the beginnings of the Rattanakosin era, and it was a place where the Lakorn, the Thai theatre, was considered originating.
4. Personal sites, whereas the interest is based on family links with a particular place. The relevance of those places is only relegated to personal experience, and they can be as simple as the place of birth, or connected with other important events on someone’s life.

In general, it can be said that the values of most sites can be considered as interchangeable, at least between international and national levels. In fact, the passage from national to international is simply based on how hard national committees have lobbied for the registration of national sites into the World Heritage List. This passage also depends on the importance attributed by the national entities to the site itself, as the international recognition means more prestige and pride for the country. Moreover, the difference in scale within the heritage sites and their national or international importance also determines the number of agencies involved, the amount of personnel and the non-heritage activities offered. The level of private intervention increases as we go down the scale, but such a relationship also varies depending on the site extension.

In the particular case of Wat Phra Kaeo/Grand Palace complex in Bangkok, the fact that the entire complex is strictly associated to the Thai royal family and their official activities blocks any attempt

of registration, as it would then be obliged to follow UNESCO regulations - therefore crystallising it the format, in spite of possibly being the most visited heritage site of Thailand. There are no published figures relative Wat Phra Kaeo visitors. In this case I follow the statement on Tourism Authority of Thailand website (http://www.tourismthailand.org/Attraction/The-Grand-Palace--52, retrieved on 30 April 2016): “ Probably the most visited and remembered landmark of Thailand, The Grand Palace in Bangkok is where every visitor must pay a visit at least once in their lifetime.” Still following Timothy and Boyd (2003, p. 13), heritage is significant on four different levels:

1. economic, for the tourism development and activities bringing more income to sites and their surrounding activities;
1. social, as a site may be important for personal and collective identities;
2. political, as a site may serve political ends;
3. scientific, as the site may preserve ancient ecosystems.

Regarding Thailand, level 4 can excluded, as their original ecosystems are by now disappeared. The other aspects are all of them relevant however.

About economic relevance (level 1), Thai cultural heritage became intertwined with international tourism development since early 1980s, as tourism in Thailand at the time was mostly a reflux of the Vietnam War period, with a strong association to sex tourism. In order to avoid such a negative image, Thai tourism authorities tried to diversify the offer, introducing heritage tourism among the possible attractions (Peleggi, 1996, p. 435; Peleggi, 2002, pp. 62-63). Thus, tourism and economic development were part and parcel of the Sukhothai and Ayutthaya historical parks (Veeravong and Pongsapich, 2000, pp. 7-8), as the National, Economic and Social Development Board relative 5-year plan for 1977 had funds for the parks and their opening. Already the NESBD Fourth National Plan (1977-1981) states (NESDB, 1977, p. 3):

“ In the recent past, Thailand has experienced a series of crises and subsequent periods of adjustments. The socio-politico-economic transitions in this country during the past three years have forced the Government to adopt a new set of development positions and priorities for the Fourth Plan”.

As the Fourth Plan was issued in 1st March, 2520 BE (1977 CE), the crises referred to are the various governments succeeded each other between 1973 and 1976.

With hindsight, seeing the registration as springboard for more tourist arrivals was certainly a

misconception about the results of UNESCO World Heritage registration. On one side, the UNESCO World Heritage List and its Convention never implied to be anything more than an instrument of protection and valorisation of heritage. UNESCO World Heritage Committee (1977, p. 1): "The cultural and natural heritage are for each nation and the international community amongst their most important and priceless possessions. Because it is irreplaceable, any loss or serious impairment of that heritage is a tragedy". The creation of the World Heritage List itself did not consider the registration in terms of tourism development, but simply as a way to give importance to heritage sites, cf. Salazar and Zhu (2015, pp. 246-247). The World Heritage Convention was established in 1972, but it became active only in 1975, when at 20 state parties signed the agreement. For the UNESCO Convention, I now refer to (Labadi, 2013, pp. 31-33). From the countries registering within the list, registration should to more economic prosperity (du Cros and McKercher, 2014, pp. 63-64; Lee, 2009).

The social and cultural aspect of heritage (level 2), can be simply clarified by two statements. Accompanying the King Rama IX and Queen Sikrit at the time of the royal visit at Ayutthaya in 1963, ML Pin Malakulm said:

> *In brief, an important element in nation building comes from one's cultural heritage. If ancient sites and objects are gone and one feels detached from one's own culture, when people have no spiritual bond with the past they tend to be unnaturally selfish. Thailand is rich in sites and objects and is blessed with many outstanding religious sites. If we can discover how to use them in the training of our young people, it would greatly benefit the state* (Charoenwongsa, 1987, p. 65).

It is relevant to say that such a quotation was given in 1963, as it was still repeated a quarter of century later. Another similar statement highlighted the necessity of raising the falling morality through the reprisal of old values, of which heritage is one of the components (Anonymous, 1990, pp. 3-4). As noted by Connors (2005, pp. 530-531), late 1970s and 1980s were times when culture and nationalism brought in order to counterattack 1976 Thammasat events. Thus, cultural heritage serves as education tool to younger generation to feel a sense of unity and patriotism, a point returning later on. The desire of unity goes together with level 3, the political connection. It has

been said, referring to the Phra Viharn/Preah Vihear dispute:

> *"UNESCO's member states use the nomination process and promotion of world heritage sites for their own domestic agendas of cultural hegemony and state nationalism (besides the well- recognized function of generating tourism income)"* (Askew, 2010, p. 23).

Or in another formulation (Labadi, 2013, p. 63):

> *Such descriptions [in the nomination dossiers] help nominated sites be cast as foundational pillars of the nation in which they are located and to define and materialize the collective identity of the nation's people.*

In fact, the political connection between heritage and Thailand is the most relevant within any discourse of it. Without going back to the origins of the actual royal dynasty, the actual Thai heritagescape was sanctioned at the beginnings of 1900s. For the discovery of the stela itself, the best account the so called *Accounts of Miraculous Manifestations*, a list of wondrous happenings between Prince Mongkut's ordination in 1824 and his death in 1868 (Krairiksh, 1991, pp. 259-261). The text referring about the discovery serves to give the parallel between the past and the future king's wisdom and prosperity, and the text was written at the time of King Mongkut's death. Thus, while some embellishment should be considered about the depiction of the discovery, the *Accounts* state that stone and throne were found in this specific temple. I use the term Heritagescape following Di Giovine (2009), as heritage landscape as determined by organisations or agencies. As it will be seen in the following pages, UNESCO has sets of rules, but the national agencies (Fine Arts Department in the case of Thailand) determine how their cultural heritage is exhibited and reconstructed. Prince Vajiravudh, the future King Rama VI, visited Sukhothai in 1908, and he identified any major architectural feature of the old site based on the description given by King Ramkhanhaeng in his stela (Peleggi, 2002, p. 39; Peleggi, 2004, pp. 141-143; Sattayanurak, 2002, pp. 112-113). King Rama VI also contributed to establish the concepts of King, Religion and People as the pillars of Thai nation. See Baker and Pasuk (2005, p. 72) for a summary From the Thai historical point of view, Sukhothai represents the foundation of Thai civilisation: King Ramkhanhaeng as the wise monarch established the principles on which Thai nation was fated to stand upon (Terwiel, 2010, pp. 19-22).

While this emphasis over heritage and nation building was established during the last stages of Siamese absolute monarchy, Phibul Songkhram and his Minister of Culture, Luang Wichit Wanakarn (Baker and Pasuk, 2005, pp. 126-127; Barmé, 1993; Connors, 2005, p. 527) continued the same approach after the foundation of a constitutional monarchy in 1932. For longer discussions about the formation of scholarship and Thai arts, I refer to Peleggi (2004; 2013; Peleggi (2015).

The end of Phibul Songkhram's premiership was not the end of the resulting association between *moradok* and nation building: the quarrel between Thailand and USA relatively to the Narai lintel stolen in 1960s from Phanon Rung temple, and disputed between USA and Thailand from early 1970s until its return in 1988, is less an archaeological dispute about repatriation of stolen objects, and more as an declaration of independence from American colonialism (Keyes, 2002).

As Sukhothai was the Wisdom of the Land, Ayutthaya was the capital which hardly fought against the Burmese invader. Within Thai historical imagery, Ayutthaya's struggle against Burma is aptly exemplified by the figures of King Naresuan, and his fight for regaining Ayutthaya's freedom from the Burmese yoke. See (Rajanubnab, 2001; Rajanubnab, 2008) for such versions in their English translations.

The importance of Sukhothai and Ayutthaya as direct "ancestors" of actual Krungthep/Bangkok cannot be overemphasised. While the dependance from Ayutthaya is certainly more present, as Ayutthaya Law (Baker and Pasuk, 2016), Ramakien tradition (Ramakien, 2538), as well as Ayutthaya Royal Chronicles (Cushman, 2006) demonstrate, Sukhothai was important as well, mostly for its view of kingship (Woodward, 2015).

Heritage Management in Thailand and historical events (1970s and 1980s)

The trend toward preservation for nation building was already an established tract of the heritage management objectives in Thailand both for nationalism and tourism diversification.

Pressing issues of mid 1970s also contributed to focus over heritage: in Southeast Asia at that time, Thailand was surrounded by communist regimes on the east (Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos), with Thailand being the base of the American troops fighting in the neighbouring countries (Terwiel, 2011a, pp. 278-280). Such atmosphere of being surrounded the enemy communist was

exacerbated by internal events. Between 1973 and 1976, public officials and civic administration governed over Thailand, after long periods of military premierships. It was a period when History as discipline became important (Reynolds, 2006, pp. viii-ix):

> In that three-year period, history suddenly was no mere classroom subject or academic field but a blunt political instrument and a focal point for debating social ills [...]. The task of academic and intellectuals was to excavate forgotten pasts and rediscover writers and works now coming back to life after a generation of neglect.

Such a novelty was enthusiastically embraced by many young students, especially within Thammasat University. In October 1976, such experience came to an abrupt halt, as paramilitary troops entered Thammasat compound, and students were killed, and a military government was established (Baker and Pasuk, 2005, pp. 189-195).

Many of those students fled to the forests, and joined the Thai Communist Party there. While the communist experience for many of them was quite short-lived, as many returned to their family by early 1980s, and a general royal pardon was issued for the few remaining Communist enthusiasts (Peleggi, 2016, pp. 9-10; Terwiel, 2011a, p. 281), the planning as Sukhothai as historical park might be considered at the light of such a reading. As for earlier times, it was employed for reinforcing the good Thai traditional values through Education, and the park should re-establish such good values (Terwiel, 2011a, p. 280). This interpretation can be proven by the formation of National Culture Commission in 1978 and the National Identity Board in 1980, both of them promoting Thai culture, in order to protect the Thai nation as whole (Connors, 2005, p. 530). The fact that in late 1970s and early 1980s different Thai governments felt the necessity to establish official commissions to reinforce the concept of Thai identity works perfectly with the planning of Sukhothai and Ayutthaya historical parks.

Methodology

As noted, in the introduction, textual analysis has been used for this project. Focused on the analysis of the four masterplans issued by FAD and TAT relatively to the now World Heirtage sites of Sukhothai and satellite sites of Khampheng Phet and Sri Sitchanalai, as well as for Ayutthaya

Historical Park, issued between 1982 and 1993. The choice of those documents matches who determines that four criteria should be judgement for selecting texts (Scott, 1990):

1. Authenticity. Is the evidence genuine and of unquestionable origin?
2. Credibility. Is the evidence free from error or distortion?
3. Representativeness. Is the evidence typical of its kind, and, if not, is the extent of its untypicality known?
4. Meaning. Is the evidence clear and comprehensible?

As noted in (Flick, 2014, p. 353), two methods can be employed for the analysis of documents; firstly, they can be analysied in a quantitative way, looking at the statistical representations of repeating items or phraseology. Secondly, the approach for analysis can be purely qualitative, what are contents of documents and what are the contests they were written. In the specific case of this research, we look how those documents are concerned about the creation of the relative planning and what they betray of the historical contexts, especially in the relationship with heritage management of the period. Such approach also aligns with analysis going on with other historical approaches, in particular cultural history (Boyes et al., 2021; Burke, 1997; Burke, 2008; Erll et al., 2008; Hunt, 1989; Wongyannava et al., 2010), as well as already practiced in Thai context previously (Gozzoli, 2016). In the text of qualitative research, it goes together with the concept of mimesis, which is the act of producing a symbolic world, in which practical and theoretical elements merge into a unicum .

The World Heritage site of Sukhothai Historical Park

As for Sukhothai Historical Park, it was a forerunner among many other cultural heritage sites in Southeast Asia: thanks to UNESCO regional office in Bangkok, a detailed archaeological analysis of the site and a database of the various archaeological and historical assets were prepared as first steps for the registration (Chapman, 2013, pp. 148-149; Peleggi, 2002, pp. 40-41; Pichard, 1980).

The Introduction to the Master plan, says about the aims (Fine Arts Department, 1982, pp. 9-10):

> “To restore and maintain the area within the city walls and close by, and the mountain district to the west.

To provide tourist facilities.

To increase the earning of the people living in the vicinity by promoting various activities, particularly for purposes of tourism.

To renew the study of Sukhothai history and sociology with fresh archaeological evidence so that present-day Thais can understand their cultural heritage in greater depth.

To enhance the atmosphere of the ancient city in every possible way, particularly by planting trees as described in the first stone inscription, as well as other trees and flowers.

To revive ceremonies and festivals that were practiced at the time of Sukhothai.

To keep the registered governmental area under the control of the Fine Arts Department by making sure that no additional people settle or use the area."

Thus, the plan aims to establish the park for some tourist revenue addressed to local inhabitants. Most of it however is focused on restoration and beautification of the park itself. Restoration need to follow what King Ramkhanhaeng inscription declares. This statement might be simply considered as a philological discourse, the word-by-word application of such a text for landscaping and reconstruction. But places and temples are identified following future King Rama VI's identification (Phra Ratchaniphom Phrabat Somdet Phra Mongkhut Klaochaoyoohua, 1983), therefore reducing the possibility of interpretation by the authority of the proponent. Most of all, the target of such AHD are modern Thai, who need to be informed about their own cultural heritage, in the same guise of ML Pin Malakum's comment. In this context, foreign visitors are not considered in such need for education. The final words of the introduction are (Fine Arts Department, 1982, p. 11): "In all, the project aims at preserving not only the bricks and stones of an ancient city but the civilization of a whole kingdom. Ancient Sukhothai will continue to 'live" to enrich the cultural heritage of the Thai nation as well as people from all over the world."(Lowenthal, 1985, p. 46) notes: "Threatened states zealously guard the physical legacy felt to embody enduring community identity". Such absence

is not a slip of the pen, but it demonstrates that education is not required by foreign visitors to those parks - or at least the planners did not considered them (Gozzoli, 2016).

What the FAD master plan declares in 1982, it is confirmed two years later, when the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) published their own master plan, under the co-operation of the Chulalongkorn University Social Institute (Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute, 1984). The plan was not simply devoted to Sukhothai and its satellite sites of Kampheng Phet and Sri Sitchanalai, but included Phitsanulok, Tak and Pichit as well. As it was prepared under the auspices of TAT, the plan was obviously about tourist development in the region. There park development as well, which was in line with the shaping of the landscape. Everything should be improved as Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute (1984, p. 5/63) says:

> Not only was Sukhothai the first capital of ethnic Thai culture, it is also believed to be on the world's earliest civilisations, as illustrated by the following historical and archaeological evidence:
>
> (1.1) Sukhothai-period art and architecture are unique and beautiful, with significant influence on Thai architectural design and art in following periods;
>
> (1.2) City planning and construction of the site reflect a significant degree of technological and agricultural development, as shown in the city walls and canals; the prominent wat in the city (Wat Mahathat and Wat Che tu Pon); and the irrigation system of ponds, reservoirs, fired-clay aqueduct pipes, etc.;
>
> (1.3). Technological advances during the Sukhothai period include such features as irrigation system and a fired-clay pottery industry;
>
> (1.4). The cultural heritage of the Sukhothai period still exists in Thai society; for example, the Thai alphabet, the Loy Krathong tradition, the Pao Tien, firework festivals, traditional merit-making by offering food to monks, etc.

The prologue stresses the fact that Sukhothai is the first ethnic capital, therefore going back to nationalistic concepts. In a sort of hyperbolic way, the master plan declares Sukhothai as one of the earliest world civilisations: historical correctness might not be required from a tourist master

plan, but King Ramkhanhaeng’s Sukhothai is dated not earlier than 1292 BCE. A few civilisations were certainly more ancient than Sukhothai, and even more monumental remains can be found elsewhere in the world. Ponds and reservoirs already appeared with Angkor Wat/ Lopburi civilisation for instance.

Within hyperbolae, point 1.4 is the most relevant in this context: Sukhothai is as important as historical capital, as well as many Thai cultural aspects derive from Sukhothai. Remarking this aspect, it is clear that Sukhothai Historical Park developed both for internal and external consumption, as those historical references point to a Thai audience anyway. A son et lumiere describing Ramkhanhaeng’s Sukhothai is part of the Loy Krathong festival, and completely narrated in Thai language (Gozzoli, 2016, p. 218; Peleggi, 2002, p. 67).

Sukhothai as Heritagescape

The joint FAD-UNESCO master plan does not say much about restoration, it only points out that the Venice Charter of restoration will be followed, but as noted already, the restoration was based on the lines of King Ramkhanhaeng’s description of its own city (Gosling, 1998, pp. 14-23; Vella, 1978, pp. 5, 203-204). The Venice Charter issued in 1964, deals with conservation and restoration of heritage, mostly following Western practices and employing ancient material for those reconstructions. In this respect, Fine Arts Department (1982, pp. 50-51), as they say they are going to follow the Venice Charter of restoration, give some leeway saying that whenever needed, modern building materials will be employed “only to consolidate crucial points”.

In fact, restoration in Sukhothai Historical Park is not simple re-attaching lost heads to Buddha statues or reassembling a few walls. As Krairiksh (2013) demonstrates, especially documenting the restorations perpetrated at Sukhothai, temples with very few surviving elements were completely restored. Such a full blown restoration could only happen as national pride was involved in the restoration itself, and the ancient city had to highlight the ancient values of wisdom. My statement here fully agrees with (Byrne, 1995, p. 278): “Under pressure from its critics, particularly in the pages of the journal Muang Boran, the government in 1985 produced the Bangkok Charter, a local set of guidelines for restoration allowing more leeway for reconstruction than permitted under the Venice Charter. It seems clear that the ·over-restoration' of Sukhothai resulted not from the state's ignorance of international conservation conventions but from a systematic pursuance of its

own agenda.” Such excessive reconstruction was highly criticised by Subrabhadis Diskul, Prince Damrong’s son and major figure of Thai archaeology (Byrne, 2014, p. 61; Chapman, 2013, p. 149; Ishizawa et al., 1988, p. 7; Krairiksh, 2013, pp. 29-32; Peleggi, 2002, p. 42). The results of the Sukhothai Historical Park gave the Heritagescape.

Such heavy reconstructions can be also explained at the light of rule 6 of the so called Bangkok Charter for restoration issued in 1985: “The conservation that mostly highlights the monumental significance is the most appropriate one to choose” (Musigakama, 1988, p. 121). See also Peleggi (2002, p. 28) for other passages of the same Bangkok Charter. The Bangkok Charter was developed after planning and restoration at Sukhothai was already completed and served as justification for such interventions. It has been stated that the Thai way of restoration, in which the temples were fully restored was part and parcel of the Asian way of heritage management and a forerunner of the later Nara Declaration (Charoenwongsa, 1995; Cleere, 1995; Ito and Larsen, 1995). The Nara declaration, from the homonymous Japanese heritage city, establishes that the restoration with new material is acceptable, as long as the essence of a building is maintained. In this context, Lowenthal (1985, pp. 384-385) already understood the importance of the identity over the simple material preservation in Japanese culture. Such a concept well matches Asian concepts of heritage management, for which restoration are more frequent, and the concept of using only original materials in order to restore objects is absent. But Nara declaration simply implies that old buildings may be restored using new material, as long as the essence of the building is maintained, not that reconstruction without documented analysis should be done.

Cultural Heritage Management in Ayutthaya

As for Sukhothai, Ayutthaya had both a FAD and TAT master plan, but differently from Sukhothai and its satellite centres however, Ayutthaya had the Tourism master plan (Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute, 1988) issued before the Fine Arts Department one, which appeared five years later, and later reissued with corrections (Fine Arts Department, 1997). As Bangkok Charter was the “leeway” for Thai heritage management in Thailand (Byrne, 1995, p. 278), it determined more freedom both for FAD and TAT for Ayutthaya planning. In the TAT master plan for Ayutthaya, more details and more reconstruction plans are given for the various temples

and buildings discussed. Possibly due to be a “primer” for the historical site, TAT master plan also merged the “normal” tourism aspect of the document, as well as the cultural heritage masterplan, mostly devoted to the actual assets and forms of improvements.

The Tourism Authority Master plan had the following objectives (Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute, 1988, p. 3/3):

> 3.4.1 To promote tourism industry to be a major sector in economic system. This is one the fact that tourism will stimulate investment and generate employment in local areas in order to distribute income and facilities throughout the whole area.
>
> 3.4.2 To conserve and restore the tourism resources in the area in order it maintain the national characteristics and uniqueness.
>
> 3.4.3 To create impression and beautiful images of Thailand to international tourists.

Talking a posteriori, point 3.4.1 implies that tourism development could flow through the Ayutthaya tourist’s population from top to bottom. As it can be seen from more documented examples such as Angkor Wat, massive interventions are needed in order to improve the tourism assets, be it historical monuments or hotels and other tourism activities. As such investments come from big hotel chains or major economic groups, the actual local stakeholders’ benefits are quite limited (Ndoro and Wijesuriya, 2015, pp. 143-144).

Point 3.4.2 simply notes that the historical park should have the same elements as developed for Sukhothai, thus the park development should follow a nationalistic view of culture and historical landscape is codified. It has been said (Colwell and Joy, 2015, p. 113): “Nationalist projects seek to use a version of the past and associated culture products for the exclusive benefit of the state”.

Point 3.4.3 again relates to the gentrification of the historical landscape, prefiguring the same sort of landscaping as planned for Sukhothai. The TAT masterplan is very clear on this regard: as most of chapter 4 in the TAT master plan is devoted to is a list of different sites and their possible architectural reconstruction or landscaping.

There is also one specific aspect of the TAT master plan that strikes any reader: education should

be promoted within the historical park. As already noted (Gozzoli, 2016, pp. 214-217), education becomes a major part of the Ayutthaya Archaeological Heritage Discourse. It is said (Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute, 1988, pp. 3/6-7):

“Educational tour for every Thai student should be promoted. It can be done by arranging an educational trip by train to study and appreciate historical value of the ancient capital. [...]

Current tourist attractions must be developed up to its full potentiality to attract foreign and domestic tourists. However educational tourism program should be targeted to attract domestic tourists”.

TAT Ayutthaya master plan talks specifically of young Thai coming by train: as one of the main stations is Bangkok, it would be easy to see it as reference to young Bangkok youth – easily influenced by subversive ideas, as 1976 Thammasat events were still flaming 10 years later.

The TAT master plan came out in 1988, and the end of the decade was torn by the academic discussion relative to the historical veracity of Ramkhanhaeng inscription (Chamberlain, 1991; Connors, 2005, p. 533; Terwiel, 2010; Terwiel, 2011b). The discussion whether the text was an original thirteenth century CE composition or a nineteenth century CE fabrication turned from being essentially academical into a national dispute, whereas one of the scholars questioning the veracity of the dating was simply invited to leave the country. Michael Wright, as mentioned by Reynolds (2006, p. vii). It is significant the reasoning behind: “[T}he inscription is a matter of national security. We have already lost the economic war and this is the cultural war”. As the controversy shook one of the cornerstones of Thai culture (Peleggi, 2015, p. 91; Wongthes, 2003), Chulalongkorn experts inserted education into their master plan in order to re-establish “historical correctness” of specific events and re-aligning culture and nation. See also King and Parnwell (2011, p. 383) for a representation of heritage management in Thai context, in which local people are simply assumed to be passive spectators. Peleggi (2015, p. 93) has noted that the Historical Parks projects started as a response to the legitimacy crisis happened during the 1970s, culminated with the Thammasat events. The plan talks about educational tours as major component for such education, but no more specifications are actually given, at least for Thai visitors. In fact, there is a list of tourist itineraries at the end of the master plan (Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute, 1988, p. Appendix B), but the target group of those itineraries seems to be foreign tourists or at least tourists with high income, not the young Thai people described in the text.

FAD's Ayutthaya and the Failed Heritagescape

The planned FAD master plan for Ayutthaya was implemented later than the TAT master plan (Fine Arts Department, 1997), and among the four master plans here documented, it is the only one having a Thai version only. The master plan is made of various sections, with the initial part highlighting the history of Ayutthaya, the legislation relative to monuments and the major temples. In the second part however, the FAD master plan gives details and reconstructions of the various temples and palaces, and this represents the major highlight of the publication itself. As noted by Jumsai (2013, p. 51), parts of the FAD Master plan were implemented in 1996 (Suam Domdet Park, restoration of the city walls, and conservation of Wat Khun Saen). In this context, the same process of gentrification as visible for Sukhothai is given - Ayutthaya Master Plan is even more detailed within this context, as FAD was the only planner and no UNESCO intervention was required. Out of the plan, two elements can be specifically pointed out in the reconstruction:

1. Temples are restored, in line to what was done at Sukhothai;
2. Walls are restored: the city was surrounded by a wall, and the fact that parts of the walls were still partially preserved on the northern side of the Ancient Palace site allowed to give importance to Ayutthaya as the fighter;

Ayutthaya escaped the Heritagescape, which was a consequence for Sukhothai. The reasons for the impossibility of a complete development of the master plans was substantially due to the lack of funding for a complete implementation. Moreover, the old site of Sukhothai had only very sparse site occupation, while in Ayutthaya, the historical monuments and the modern city are actually a unicum.

Conclusions and suggestions

As the masterplans are now date to almost three decades ago, some considerations can be done about those documents themselves. Firstly, it considers the authority of those masterplans at the light of more modern heritage and tourism planning, and one of the major considerations of those masterplans is the fact that a top-down approach is present, without considering the actual social context. While sustainable development was still in its infancy in late 1980s, and still far to be considered in heritage context, moving people out of Sukhothai Heritage Park was essentially

ignoring the fact that population living in places for generations were actually chased out of their homes. It was happening in Thailand in 1980, it was going to happen in Egypt in 1990s (Mitchell, 2001), and Jordan as late as 2020 (Al-Bqour, 2020), but it generates conflicts and distrusts between national organisation and local populations, which quite often search “revenge” through damaging or neglect of the heritage they were actually living in. A more sustainable development approach would have been considering those local communities in the planning stage, and clearly identify their exigencies in order to find some co-operation with the issue of moving and rehousing.

The second issue is the actual motivation of those masterplans: within the various reconstructions and educational intents, the masterplans seem to target more a domestic dimension of heritage than an international perspective, as the criteria of embellishment of the heritagescape and the education aims promoted for Ayutthaya are more in tune with domestic than foreign visitors. Especially for education, signs and interpretation material brings up architectural concepts and part of Thai history which are not known by a foreign audience, therefore excluding the same international targeted for (Gozzoli et al., 2019; Gozzoli, 2016). A more coherent planning would have looked at how different exigencies of domestic and. International tourists could have been considered within the heritage framework they were working on.

The third issue is about planning and implementation. With the partial exclusion of Sukhothai – but not for Kampheng Phet or Sri Sitchanalai – any planning done has mostly remained on paper. The case of Ayutthaya is certainly the most visible one. If the FAD plan is checked, most of the planning has never come to profit, as the lack of funding did not actual bring the panning to conclusion. But the same can be said for the TAT plans for both Sukhothai and Ayutthaya, which remained incomplete or undone, and it retains the kind of attention for planning that has been continued for Rattanakosin Area for instance (Peerapun et al., 2020), or Radchadamnoen Avenue (NESDB, 2003). While planning has become part of the UNESCO criteria since 1996, and I consider the document of Plain of Jars in Laos Heritage inscription as one of the best seen up to now (Department of Heritage, Ministry of Information, Culture & Tourism Laos, 2016) , the implementation part – even in the international arenas – remains a long-term *desideratum*. It is also essentially based on the actual discrepancy between the UNESCO World Heritage inscription, which simply looks at the site in the various 10 criteria for the inscription, and the promises that each state member promises to take in order to render the site better preserved and open to

various visitor experiences. But then, whether the implementation stage of those promised improvements remains years down the road, if ever implemented. As discussed in a forthcoming paper, whether sites could be delisted if planning is not respected and the site becomes endangered is something UNESCO Heritage Center should consider. The case of the Plain of Jars in Laos is the one of those cases to be considered: registered in 2019, it is already damaged by tourism, and only “saved’ by the sudden arrival of Covid-19 pandemic (Untakul, 2020).

Lastly, the wrong conclusion that listing within the World Heritage sites also contemplate an immediate increase of tourists’ visitations and generated income should be considered as a thing of the past, as other elements are more relevant – first and foremost, the fame of the city and the proximity to tourist nodes or airport. In this sense, the cities of Sukhothai, Ayutthaya and Ban Chiang have not seen that kind of visitors’ figures spike immediately after the registration, both for the issues above, as well as for the imagery of Thailand, more connected to beach tourism. A more considerate approach to cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, should be considered, whereas the scope of such heritage is both for Thai visitors who would like to appreciate what the past represent in their lives, and for foreign tourists who would like to get a glimpse of Thailand different from the usual Sun, Sand and Sea.

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