



VISITOR CASE OF SITE MANAGEMENT: VALLE DEI TEMPLI (THE VALLEY OF THE TEMPLES), AGRIGENTO

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Abstract

Sustainable tourism is achievable by heritage management, because when heritage is conserved and managed, it could be introduced to the community. Heritage destinations become a part of growing tourism sector. People generally would like to experience accessing archaeological remains in situ, therefore service infrastructure is required. Visitor case is one of the most important sections of site management to achieve both conservation and economic advantages. The current research is a case of visitor arrangements done in The Valley of the Temples.

1. INTRODUCTION

Archaeology is an effective component of developed and developing countries' tourism industries [1]. Heritage tourism has become a part of the tourism industry sector individually. It makes the region and the nation financially active whether the site is visited from the high number of guests. Archaeological sites are under the group of heritage tourism or cultural tourism [2]. There is a basic approach to conservation that is achieved by making assets alive; it is important for sites to have proper functions. In terms of archaeological areas, visitor support is essential to be conserved [3].

Archaeological areas are in the interest of different field experts such as archaeologists, architects, urban planners, art historians, anthropologists, tourism. Experts' knowledge can be different. For example, architects are focused on the structures, urban planners' focus is the site settlement, art historian focus on the history whereas tourism manager focuses on the visitor enhancement. All range of experts needs to work with the multidisciplinary approach to make archaeological sites fully understood and conserved sustainably.

When excavations and research are completed on archaeological sites, tangible finds are transported to the museums meanwhile anastylosis is applied for particular intangible finds on its original location, and presentation of findings are located on the site where appropriate. People visit archaeological sites because of tourism marketing and reputation. Ross et al. (2017) defines archaeological tourism as tangible and intangible assets, relics, and myths [4]. Lowenthal (1985) states that acting heritage as an income, archaeological areas could be destructed; and transportation of finds from sites to the museum could become a necessity. As a result, existing museums could face overloading [5]. People would like to experience accessing archaeological remains in situ, therefore service infrastructure is required.

Site management is a key fragment of the conservation of world heritage [6]. By developing management plans, sites are observed precautions against possible harmful issues. One of the negative factors effect conservation is tourism. Sustainable tourism is achievable by heritage management, because when heritage

is conserved and managed, it could be introduced to the community [7]. Orbaşlı (2013) says that economic and social improvement subjects are not top of priority on management plan aims however planning could illustrate social and economic advances [8].

Archaeological areas such as delicate places that touching, sitting, climbing, walking create deteriorations as long term effects [9]. Managing tourists is one of the most important factors of site management notions in such a developing world [10]. The success of the site management plan is related to visitor management [11]. Leung et al. (2018) say that by preparing visitor management plans, it would be helpful for conservation issues caused by visitors [12]. Overcrowding, handling, trampling, humidity, temperature, pilfering, graffiti, traffic-related problems, poor communication with the local and lack of visitor management are the typological impacts of visitors on heritage sites [13].

Archaeological site qualifications, visitor aspect and management planning influence the consequences of tourism [14]. Albrecht (2017) defines “visitor management” as management actions limit visitor’s possible negative behaviour. The aim of management is to conserve the area and enhance the visitor’s practice [15]. Ababneh et al. (2014) state that organized services, activities and service infrastructure make visitors have a better experience on archaeological sites and revisit the site [16].

Archaeological sites are located in city centers or in suburbs. Due to the legislation sites have buffer zones which prohibit settlement around. Generally, wider archaeological sites are located outside the towns or villages, and there are basic units that need to be constructed around these sites. Residents of these areas are also responsible to prevent the inappropriate actions that may damage the sites. Local people generally concern about both the positive and negative consequences of tourism on the sites. Local income in smaller areas are generally low-average, so human would be active in heritage to have financial resources [1]. Also, various strategies are developed for the cooperation of locals and experts to achieve successful and sustainable conservation for archaeological sites. Pacifico and Vogel (2012) believe that archaeologists may encourage conservation and tourism activities because they have regular communication with inhabitants in local regions [1]. Visitor caused damages could be prevented by alternatives such as communication with visitors or visitor management. Furthermore, it is related to the presentation of archaeological sites [17]. This paper will give an information visitor case of site management planning and evaluate the applications considering Valley of the Temples Archaeological Site of Agrigento, Sicily, Italy.

2. VISITING MANAGEMENT IN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

Archaeology is linked to the heritage because of the demonstration of identity, culture and development phase of societies; however, the relationship of heritage and tourism is clarified as the profitable value of archaeological finds [1].

Ketebe and Wondirad (2019) claim that there are two types of visitor management tools; hard and soft visitor management tools [10]. These two visitor management strategies could be helpful to get restrictions according to sites' value and physical conditions. By hard visitor management tool, people should get permission to access particular parts of the site, shorten the use of fragile areas, restriction of visitor activities, zoning, a visitor time table for entrance, whereas soft management tools are defined as hard copy brochures, maps, leaflets, newspapers, signboards, TV and radio, personnel guides at visitor sites [10].

Martin-Ruiz et al. (2010) state that outdoor activities are essential gaining pleasure on sites [18]. Considering cultural tourism, not only the heritage site is adequate for the visitor’s satisfaction. Place’s impression, historical significance, physical conditions, service quality are a few important components of visitor’s evaluation [18]. Weather is essential when considering open-air places, archaeological sites have a high and low season for tourism. Maintaining “continuous care” is an issue for open-air archaeological sites [19]. High season visitors pressure results deterioration on archaeological sites [20]. Lack of management planning concerning visitors could create pollution, vandalism, moisture [21].

To add dynamism to the archaeological sites, several activities are planned such as concerts, theatres on the areas, and these activities could change the image of the place [4]. Therefore culture, gastronomy, handicrafts are tourism indicators that attract people. The research done by Martin-Ruiz et al (2010)

demonstrates that leisure activities such as festivals, concerts, and exhibitions programmed on the site would promote people's interest [18]. Besides, understanding of the place and the culture is an important satisfying factor of tourist perceptions. Site managers are expected to introduce local culture by providing activities [22].

The increasing number of tourists visiting cultural heritage sites causes conservation concerns. Mustafa and Balaawi (2012) say that random and inconsiderate behavior of visitors could provoke a deterioration of the sites [23]. It is probable to prevent such actions by planning visitor management. With site management plans all stakeholders are encouraged to be active in the management process, so the site's significance is preserved [3]. Ensenat Soberanis et al. (2019) state that the tourism population has a positive effect on the economy whereas it negatively affects the conservation of archaeological sites and the lifestyle of society residences around the sites [21]. However, Orbaşlı (2013) states that additional roads are planned to reach archaeological sites located outer side of the towns and city centers that have not positive effects on the local economy [8].

Albrecht (2017) claims flow, movement and behavior of tourists are the topics of visitor management. It is also related to several facilities such as service, aid, transportation, visitor center, infrastructure, café, etc [15]. Visitors generally use 4 ways when visiting the site;

1. maps, signs,
2. guidebook,
3. audio guide,
4. joining a guide tour [17].

Physical reconstruction is not preferred for archaeological finds as opposed to Venice Charter. So, active and passive methods to store asset's visual data are selected, then analyzed with various methods, and as result tools, arrangements and models are created. Apollonio and his colleagues (2012) state that laser scanning, photogrammetry, and various data could be used for web-based 3D GIS models which represent a working framework includes all kind of information about the artifacts [24]. Even this method is created for professional use, simplifying information would be helpful for the visitors. On the other hand, diverse visual representation techniques arising with new technologies that are being used to create a digital environment for visitors.

3. IDENTIFICATION OF VALLE DEI TEMPLI (THE VALLEY OF THE TEMPLES) AND VISITOR MANAGEMENT IN THE AREA

Meskill (2015) says that the World Heritage nominated places make people travel to World Heritage Sites [25]. Rebanks (2009) states that by being on the World Heritage List, sites started obtaining benefits from being popular and tourism [26]. Adie (2017) believes that UNESCO World Heritage Status is an advantage in the context of policy and economy in addition to conservation [27]. On the other hand, visitors do not seek the status of World Heritage before visiting an archaeological site, because archaeological sites already demonstrate ancient cultures and settlements located on wide lands and get interested commonly.

Valley of the Temples has been stated as a World Heritage since 1997 [28]. The selection criteria of outstanding universal value consist of the first four criteria of the World Heritage Convention. Criteria are the Doric temples (criterion I), Greek settlement find on the Mediterranean region (criterion II), conserved Greek civilization testament (criterion III), and Greek architecture on the land (criterion IV) [28]. Agrigento is located on Sicilia, southern coast Italy (Figure 3.1). Valley of the Temples (Valle dei Templi) is located in the city of Agrigento.

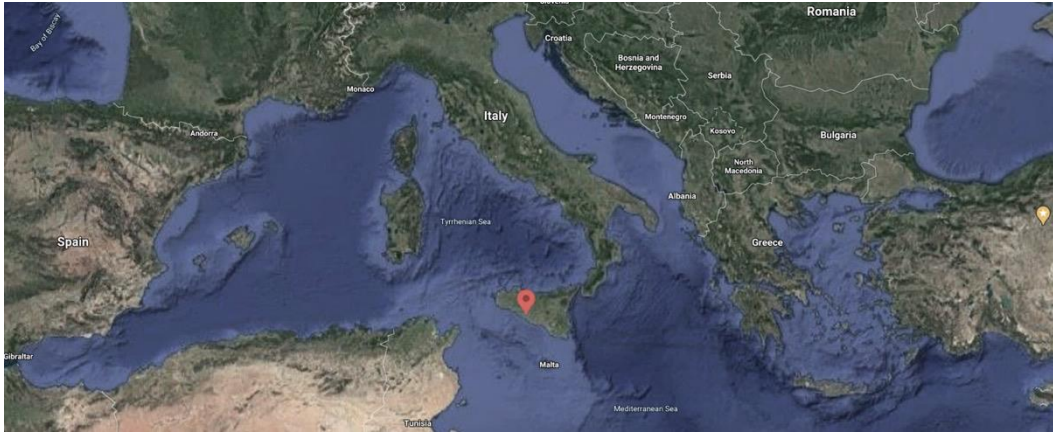


Figure 3.1. City of Agrigento Location [29].

The site covers 934 ha land in the area (Figure 3.2). It is located 4 miles away from Agrigento city center; it is possible to cycle, walk or use public transportation. The site is placed between the zone between Akragas and Hypsas rivers. The site is subjugated under 20/2000 legislation named as “The Establishment of Valley of the Temples and Archaeological and Landscape Park”. With this legislation, the site is divided into three areas as;

1. archaeological site,
2. environment and landscape and
3. natural area [30].

With the regional law 20/2000;

- the identification, conservation, research and enhancement of the archaeological heritage,
- the protection and safeguarding of both archaeological and landscape,
- the enhancement of heritage for education and recreation,
- the promotion of information and awareness policies for public,
- the development of local resources for tourism of the Valley of the Temples is aimed [30].

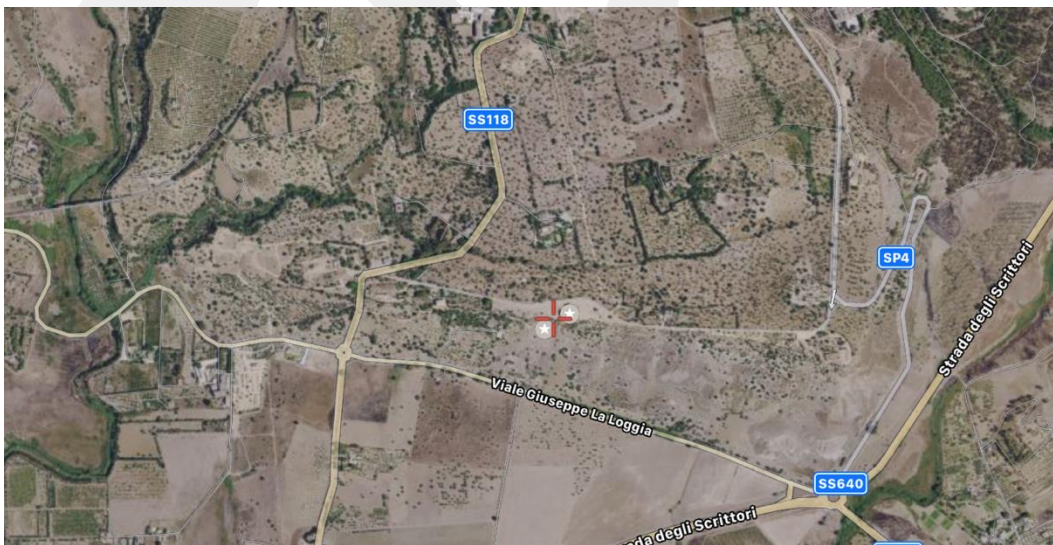


Figure 3.2. Agrigento Map [31].

The area was founded in the 6th century as a Greek community. The nationality named Akragas had a 12-kilometer wall with its nine gateways and population with over 200.000 inhabitants. By 406 BC Carthaginians surrounded and settled till 210 BC, Romans came and captured the control. Then several occupations occurred, and the city developed by the time. It was popular with the agriculture and ceramic craftsman during the historical period. It still has agricultural production of olives, almonds, vines, pistachios, citrus fruits, domestic figs, prickly pears, fruit trees, and ornamental shrubs [32]. In terms of architecture, temples have the main interest on the site; Temple of Hera, Temple of Concordia, Temple of Heracles, Temple of Zeus, Temple of Vulcan, Temple of Asclepius, Temple of Demeter, Temple of Athena are the Doric temples dedicated to Gods. Physical steel and hedge barriers were placed around the temples to limit the access and conserve the archaeological finds (Figure 3.3).



Figure 3.3. The Temples on the Site (taken by author)

Agrigento's population was 58.956 in 2018 [33]. It attracts people with the temples structured in the valley. Cronaca (2020) posted about the increase of the number of tourists visiting the Valley of the Temples; it is recorded that 956,578 visitors accessed the site by December 2019 which is 7000 people far more than 2018 [34]. In addition to the number of visitors, the observation of visitor profile is essential when managing visitor management. It could be much more efficient to seek visitor profiles and highlight particular issues. Ticket sale data is a way to achieve the general profile.

There are three car parks around the three gates and tour buses park on the couch park. There are four bus routes passes through the stops in front of the three gates, shuttles could be provided for visitors from the city center. Furthermore, there could be signboards in Agrigento and neighbour cities to promote visiting the site. It is important to engage the locals of Agrigento, and visitors are anticipated to stay in the city center after the visit. According to article 6/9 of law 20/2000 internal roads are planned to be developed to connect the city center of Agrigento and the valley [30]. Berry et al. (2002) state that visitors' time and effort to get a service is another component for the satisfaction, for instance, waiting on the queue, operating

hours are convenient matters [35]. Three gates are convenient for the site and people just spend extra time for the security check which is a must for archaeological sites.

Utility, gas, light, phone, gas and similar public service infrastructure works are permitted only in compliance with the archaeological subsoil and existing plants [30]. Security cameras and light for the evening visit were installed on the site. Also, roads and pedestrian roads should consider the existing structure and nature. Existing infrastructure is roads, footpaths, WC, café, bookshop, fountains, banks, shuttles, emergency rooms, bins are appropriately located on the site.

It is important for archaeological sites to be accessible for all. All applications done for visitor management should be observed by considering people who have an impairment. Physical arrangements should also respect the self-confidence. Valle dei Templi has an inclined visitor route link to the temples. It is convenient for people with a wheelchair to visit the site (Figure 3.4). However, it is more required to make appropriate adjustments. On the other hand, tactile maps and signboards were implied with Braille (Figure 3.4). Hearing-impaired visitors are provided with monitors on the entrance and site maps which have sign language videos attached to QR codes for the introduction; audio guide service with proper maps exists; and shuttles are available to visit the site (which is free for impaired people) [32].



Figure 3.4. Wheelchair use and Braille Tactile Map on the site (taken by author)

It is important for visitors to gain an understanding and importance of heritage. Without reading or searching may not be sufficient to have all this information from the signboards. Informative signboards of archaeological finds and anastylosis have 2D, 3D, section and detail drawings of the find and brief information in Italian, English, and French (Figure 3.5).

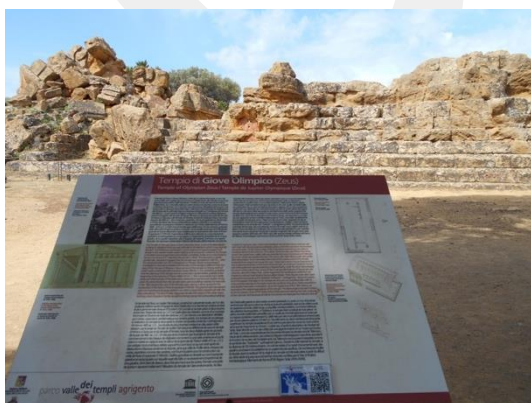


Figure 3.5. Informative Signboards on the Site (taken by author)

Article 2/5 of the regional law of 20/2000 says the existing buildings could be transformed into accommodation and service buildings for social, recreational, cultural and tourist purposes however volume and height of the provisions should be regarded [30]. Villa Aurelia which was constructed as a house of Sir Alexander Hardcastle -made archaeological works on the site for twelve years- is now served as the park's main building and open to the temporary exhibitions (Figure 3.6) [32].



Figure 3.6. Villa Aurelia (taken by author)

Su et al. (2020) state that tourists travel heritage sites to gain emotional, recreational, and educational or cultural experiences [22]. Before visiting a heritage site, people research and get perception from media, books, tv or the internet. This image concluded as a positive or negative experience after visiting. Considering online facilities, the site has an official website that gives updated information about the closing days, events, archaeological artifacts, landscape, tickets (Figure 3.7). There are also Twitter and Instagram accounts visitors could be informed however are not updated.

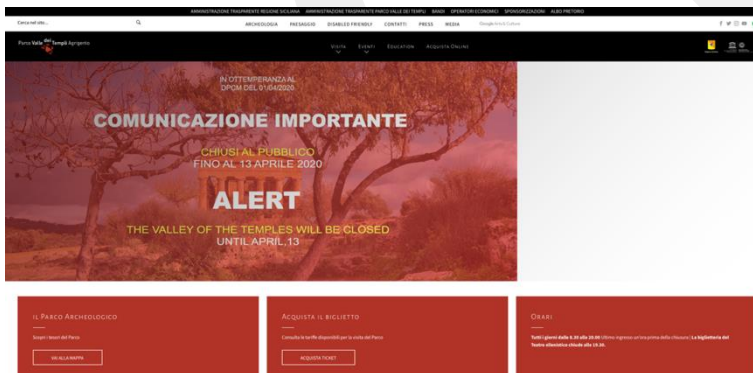


Figure 3.7. The Valley of the Temples Archaeological Park Official Website [32].

Managing informative elements on sites such as guidebooks, guidance staff, supporting materials (e.g. map, brochure) and on-site online facilities would make tourists have positive images during and after visiting the site [22]. Facilities managed are the demonstration of particular importance given to the visitors that would be helpful for promotion. With its vast land Agrigento Archaeological Site is suitable to organize events that make visitors have pleasant experiences. Events are organized on the site generally in front of the temple of Concordia; during the site visit, Sicily Symphony Orchestra concert arrangements were being held on the site in April 2018 (Figure 3.8). The latest events occurred were Google Camp (2017), the re-enactment of the Triumph of Esseneto (2018) and Fashion Show (2019) (Figure 3.9). Weight of heavy and numerous equipment and human could cause undesired results. Adequate precautions should be observed to prevent possible damages. Moreover, there is a camping area 1.5 km far away from the site.



Figure 3.8. Sicily Symphony Orchestra Arrangements on the site (taken by author)



Figure 3.9. Camp Dinner, Re-enactment of the Triumph of Esseneto and Dolce Gabbana Fashion Show in the archaeological site of Agrigento [36, 37, 38].

Presentation and interpretation of archaeological sites are anticipated as one of the primary subjects of site management [17]. Archaeological finds are meaningful to the visitors when the anastylosis technique is used. However, it is impossible for most of the sites. So basic information and 3D Models are informative when presented on the site signboards and museums. Pietro Griffo Archaeological Museum is located around the Saint Nicholas Church finds and exhibits archaeological artifacts of Valley of the Temples. Visiting costs 8 € for the museum and 13 € museum and the valley. Finds and historical documents are displayed in the museum for visitors (Figure 3.10). Limited parts are suitable for disabled access however there are no additional arrangements for visual or hear impairment (Figure 3.11). UNESCO advises that in terms of having a limited source of heritage it is better to apply low-tech and cost solutions. Application of restriction of access to sensitive areas on the site, more expensive ticketing system for particular areas,

tickets in certain times could manage visitor capacity on archaeological sites [39]. In the Valley of the Temples, there is not an action to limit visitors to the site.



Figure 3.10. Pietro Griffio Archaeological Museum (taken by author)

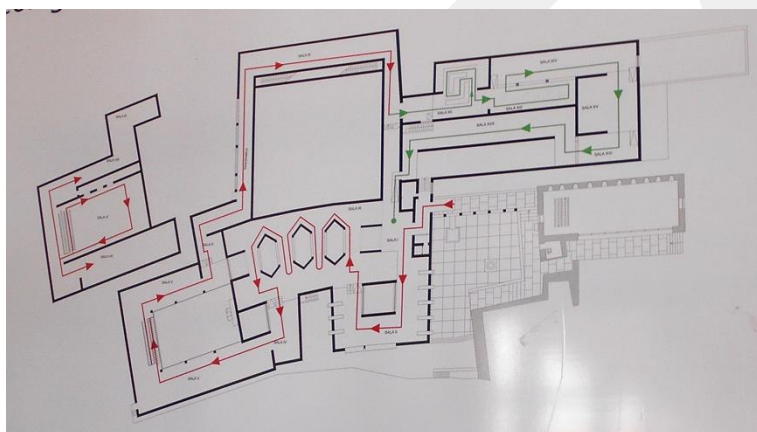


Figure 3.11. Pietro Griffio Archaeological Museum Visitor Routes (Pietro Griffio Archaeological Museum Information Board, taken by author)

3. DISCUSSION

Visitor management is divided into two groups as hard and soft applications [3]. With direct operations, visitors are supposed to obey the orders such as limitations on the entrance to the site [40]. On the other hand, indirect operations are more flexible, for example with warning signboards people are supposed not to touch the frescos of a unit wall. Pedersen (2002) believes that it is more effective when visitor management is implemented in both direct and indirect operations [2]. Valley of the Temples is an example of direct and indirect limitations; physical barriers, closed areas, warning signs are available on the site.

Su et al. (2020) claim that infrastructure, accommodation alternatives, cuisine, shopping, and pleasure business aspects strengthen positive comments about the places [22]. Guidance, souvenir shop, WC, usable technology, and site accessibility condition is anticipated to be managed as possible. The economy is an essential factor and works inside the park can be covered by visitor fees. Entrance fees of particular archaeological sites are used to fund excavations and research, so conservation and management financial

issues could be solved with this option [41]. Ketebe and Wondirad (2019) say local people try to arrange accommodation, restaurants, cafe-bars, several leisure activities to keep people around the heritage site [10]. It is an issue for such World Heritage Sites due to the effect on integrity.

Carrying capacity is also a solution for areas like there are archaeological buried artifacts above the ground. According to Ketebe and Wondirad (2019) with effective visitor management may prevent undesirable consequences of tourist density [10]. Visitor overload is one of the cases affects both the interior and exterior capacity of the places. According to UNWTO (1981) carrying capacity should balance visitor expectation and physical, economic and socio-cultural integrity by organizing the total number of people visiting the site at the same time [42].

While planning visitor management in archaeological sites it is acquired to analyze visitors' effects on structures, economy and visitor experience [21]. Timoty and Boyd (2013) state that archaeological site visitor profile dominantly consists of well educated, wealthy, middle-aged [44]. Analyzing the tourism structure of the site and tourist type are suggested actions to manage tourism [2]. World Tourism Organisation (2014) encourages site managers to monitor visitor graphics and behavior for the long term and review management plans [44]. Blasco Lopez and her colleagues (2020) prove that perceived value, service experience gained, and new service alternatives provided on the archaeological site visit have positive impacts on visitor's loyalty [45]. The Valley of the Temples is an archaeological site that attracts tourists and has an increasing graphic. According to Gravari-Barbas (2018), heritage is a valuable tool used for tourism progress. Moreover, places may lose original functions but become popular in terms of visitation, continue to be alive with visitors [46]. Moreover, both young and old people use online applications such as Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook to have social interaction and search, as a result, it is important to have and develop updated accounts or applications for such archaeological sites to achieve enhancement.

4. CONCLUSION

The aim of this paper was to highlight the visitor management arrangements of the Valley of the Temples. In this context, certain issues that directly affect the heritage sites are addressed and successful practices are demonstrated. Valley of the Temples is close to Agrigento city center which has easy access from other countries. For such a valuable and attractive World Heritage Site, it is important to balance tourism and conservation.

Public access should be provided by maintaining the conservation. Access is strengthened with visitor arrangements on the site. Valley of the Temples is an example of direct and indirect limitations; physical barriers, closed areas, warning signs are available on the site. It is stated in the discussion that zoning could be useful because it makes lands separated concerning its use. For instance, regular visitors could not walk around all of the lands which are zoned. Furthermore, there are special areas that visitors should get separate tickets to get in. This could prevent visitor overload for such fragile areas.

Site management plan consists of several headlines, and visitor case is one of the core subjects. It could be said that tourism and heritage support each other. The visitor case of site management is quite occupied considering services and facilities. Being a disabled-friendly site is the demonstration of a positive contribution to the reputation. In addition to the historical atmosphere, visitor adjustments such as hygiene services, café, souvenir shop, restaurants, emergency rooms, communication equipment, security, guidance, etc. also affect experience directly. Visitor's pleasant experience is essential for heritage tourism, because the level of achievement would affect the personal comments to possible visitors. Indeed, key is to find and maintain the harmonious balance between the conservation practice and visitor enhancement of heritage sites. As a result, site managers could design a visitor tracking system that keep the visitor activity on the sites to achieve long term success. Moreover, with developing technologies, people expect updated configurations in and around. Thus, managers could seek the developments and apply applicable technologies to the site to follow the progress. Management of World Heritage Sites is practical examples for further applications. Finally, visitor assessment of heritage sites on a larger scale could be studied and a base visitor management model could be designed as a further research.

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