P22. SOS Archaeological Heritage: Legislation, Preservation, Sustainability and Rescue

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The destruction of heritage has been, over millennia, a political weapon of conquest and subjugation. Today, this destruction is essentially due to the lack of recognition of archaeological heritage's existence, negligence and/or economic reasons, although the latter can be seen as an equal form of territorial conquest. The absence of projects aiming to identify and register archaeological heritage, or their commonly generalised low resources, often results in the disappearance of unknown and known sites due to natural causes or human action. The legislation created to prevent these situations proves insufficient, and cases of destruction follow one another at an accelerated pace.

Sometimes, measures aimed at registering and preventing the destruction of archaeological heritage are not fast or restrictive enough, and fines are not dissuasive enough. It is often less costly to destroy and pay a fine than to financially guarantee the safeguard and integrity of these sites. In certain scenarios, the classification of archaeological heritage, considered by many to be one of the best ways to guarantee its protection, often has a perverse effect: the increase in the cost of living in these areas, pushing traditional populations away from the places where they have always lived. The laws that intend to preserve a context can end up mischaracterizing it, thus contributing to the erasure of what was intended to be preserved. There are numerous examples around the world.

Heritage education, one of the most powerful tools for preservation, is still insufficient and investment in this area is clearly deficient. Communities need to be aware of the importance of their heritage (material or immaterial), both from a social and economic point of view. You cannot protect what you do not consider worthy of protection, and it is necessary that the populations feel their heritage as part of themselves, as something worth protecting.

We propose to set up a panel where all these dimensions are debated, experiences and case studies are shared, and concrete measures for preserving archaeological heritage can be addressed.

Keywords: Heritage; Legislation; Preservation; Sustainability; Rescue.

Thematic lines: Destroyed Heritage and Vulnerable Heritage; Heritage Actors and Stakeholders; Heritage Practices; Heritage Management; Conservation, Restoration and

Sustainability; Patrimonialization/Heritagization; Challenges, Discourses and Heritage Policies.

Short bio: João Barreira is a member of CEAACP (U. Coimbra), CEAUP (U. Porto) and of the Cooperative "O Legado da Terra." He participated in the inclusion of Mbanza Kongo (Angola) on the UNESCO World Heritage List, and is part of ongoing works with local teams ensuring the protection and dissemination of African heritage.

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