PUBLIC INTERPRETATION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE AND ARCHAEO TOURISM IN THE SULTANATE OF OMAN

VOLUME II

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CHAPTER SEVEN
THE SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXT AND PUBLIC INTERPRETATION

7.1. INTRODUCTION
As discussed in Chapter Three, socio-cultural factors, such as value systems, morals, reservations, behaviours, community organization and collective lifestyle, are critical influential aspects in PIN of AH. Based on the research findings, this chapter explores the ways in which PIN might affect or be affected by SCC of a particular host community in Oman, e.g. differing alternative interpretations. This is because without taking into account SCC of a particular area, the potential of PIN in developing archaeotourism will be challenged continuously and there will be no ‘committed public’ (Fowler 1981: 57). The consideration of Omani SCC is important before adapting and deploying interpretive approaches from non-Omani contexts; this is supported by PIN philosophy of the National Trust, UK, where PIN needs to be bespoke to the interpreted site and the presented themes rooted in the place (Taylor 2006).

Also, the importance of SCC comes from the fact that the government, under the leadership of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos, has devised a strategy to develop tourism and encourage investment in this sector so that it can effectively support the socio-economic development of the country, while at the same time tourism in Oman is envisaged to be a disciplined activity that goes in line with the Omani society’s traditions (Ministry of National Economy 2001). Therefore, the creation and development of AH should be part of larger socio-cultural and economic processes in a harmonic way where both host and guests are considered. Yet, currently little attention was given to SCC at heritage attractions, including archaeological sites. Besides, the process of ‘sedimentation’ is
another problem when layers of sedimented cultural meanings serving as a barrier between us and realities (Crotty 1998: 59).

Based on the findings, the following sections will briefly discuss the influence of SCC on PIN of AH in Oman in relation to six major subjects which are: (1) Religious Values and Social Reservations; (2) Socio-Political Issues and PIN; (3) Alternative Interpretations of AH; (4) Archaeotourism as a Socio-Cultural Phenomenon; (5) The Media and PIN of AH in Oman; (6) Education and PIN of AH in Oman.

7.2. RELIGIOUS VALUES AND SOCIAL RESERVATIONS

Article (1) and Article (2) of ‘The Basic Law of the State’, established by the Royal Decree 26/75 and disseminated on 6/11/1996 (Ministry of Legal Affairs 1996), affirmed that Oman is an ‘Arab, Islamic state’ and that ‘the State’s religion is Islam and the Islamic Shari’ah (law) is the basis of legislation’. This is not surprising since around 630 AD Islam has been playing a vital role in the formation of the Omani socio-cultural, economic and political contexts (Ministry of Information 2005). Islam enjoins ‘genuine, human, equitable and reciprocal cross-cultural communication’ (Din 1989: 554). Muslims are asked to always assist travellers and ‘provide hospitality to visitors who, under the Islamic law, enjoy the rights of citizens’ (Henderson 2003: 448).

Similarly, in Islam guests are asked to respect the privacy and culture of the hosts (Aziz 1995) where sometimes tourists occupy places with cultural meanings that belong to others (Robinson 2001). Orbasli (2007: 161) used the term ‘Islamic City’ to mean those

200 Though, the Basic Law affirms the equality of all citizens before the law and freedom of religions and religious rites as Article (28) records.
historic towns or settlements where the Islamic cultural and social values are attached to them which could present serious challenges for tourism development if this is not realized by planners. For instance, Burns and Cooper (1997: 555) talked about tourism in Yemen ‘where both cultural and religious issues are perceived as everyday matters, the interactional nature of tourism and the inevitable mingling of consumer and producer, can be problematic’.

The same can be said about Oman which emphasizes the consideration of religious values and social reservations in tourism planning, including interpretive infrastructure and services, especially at religious ancient monuments which attract visitors (Omani and foreigners). For example, many graveyards and mausoleums in Dhofar region function both as sacred spaces and as tourist attractions (al-Shahri 1992). Herein, Woodward (2004: 173) warned that not all religious sites ‘are able to resolve some of the conflicts that arise from non-religious use of faith buildings’.

This means that interpreters are required to consider what Robinson (1999: 7) called the ‘cultural carrying capacity’. For instance, during the 2003 excavations inside the ancient Great Mosque of Bahla, located south-east Bahla Fort, archaeologists dug up some human bones which dated back to the third millennium B.C as confirmed by AM6 and AM33. The exhumation and display of these bones within the mosque have been disapproved by the Grand Mufti\textsuperscript{201}, Sheikh Ahmed al-Khalili, who asked the people in charge to displace them outside the mosque (AM4). The locals who are usually fascinated by the finds and do not show any opposition about archaeological projects,

\textsuperscript{201} The official religious affairs advisor for the Omani government.
they might do when it comes to dig up human burials as this is considered as a
disrespect and disturbance of the human-beings (AM13, AM12). The issue of
excavating, studying, displaying and storing human remains is a common issue
worldwide where within many cultures and societies a wide variety of conflicting
beliefs exist about what should or should not be done with human remains (Hubert
1994).

The commercial development of archaeological sites can sometimes overlook the local
traditional significance of a site and the socio-cultural well-being of a community (Ucko
1994a). As part of heritage-tourism development, PIN planners are directly responsible
to consider the fact that religion contributes to the construction of SCC of Omani
society. As in regard to PIN in particular, Broadie (2005) believes that the local
population, who represents the first audience, should be consulted before planning or
displaying any presentation. PIN stewardship should be selective and cautious in
communicating information, designing and locating interpretive facilities. For instance,
considering the segregation between male and female visitors in interpretive programs
is of importance to Omani society (AM30).

One of the controversial issues that needs to be addressed is the gender issue. For
instance, AS8 mentioned that it is not preferred that females work in archaeology.
According to AM4, basically, there is no harm as women do archaeology according to
Islamic regulations; however, women should be segregated from men at work places
and should not be accompanied at work with a man who is not a mahram, a non-
marriageable companion.
This is confirmed in a study conducted by al-Ameri (2005) in Oman who shows that most respondents preferred sex-segregated working conditions for women. Also, about 66% of the respondents asserted the influence of the socio-cultural reservations; the thing which prevents a lot of Omani women from working in places that lack segregation policy (al-Amri 2005). This might explain the low number of female graduates from the Department of Archaeology at Sultan Qaboos University (Ministry of National Economy 2005b). Accordingly, it is not surprising the some respondents in al-Ameri’s (2005: 95) study listed ‘Archaeological Diggings’ as one of the unsuitable professions for women.

Similarly, Muslim women ‘do appear to be disadvantaged as tourists, hosts and workers in the tourism industry’ (Henderson 2003: 449), though this varies from one place to another and from time to time depending on such factors as the level of liberalism and personal values. Again, based on al-Ameri’s (2005) study, working at travel agencies in general is considered one of the improper jobs for women in Oman. Additionally, it is not permitted that a woman travels alone for more than 24 hours unless accompanied by a mahram (Din 1989, AM4).

Considering this, those Omani females who desire to work as tour guides would be challenged unless there is a policy goes congruently with the socio-cultural norms. Until then, women might continue to miss out on formal employment opportunities in PIN because the norms continue to restrict the type of economic activities in which women may be engaged. Although the ‘Basic Statue of the State’ of 1996 was not based on

202 This is similar to Indonesia where Wilkinson and Pratiwi (1995) mentioned that women should not contact foreign tourists; women being involved in guiding are not regarded favourably by the community.
gender discrimination, e.g. Article 17 (Ministry of Legal Affairs 1996), the Human Development Report (Ministry of National Economy 2003a: 173) recorded that:

Laws by themselves are not enough to put an end to various forms of discrimination against women in Oman. Prevailing values and economic and social pressures often block the application of these Laws in real life.

Since the 1970s, Oman witnessed a significant advancement in education of females and provision of employment opportunities for them as the governmental statistics show203 (Ministry of National Economy 2003b, 2005a). Yet, active women's participation in the development process is still inhibited by several obstacles, including some of the social reservations, e.g. conventional male attitude towards women (Ministry of National Economy 2003a, Gerd Weisgerber: personal communication: 07/June/2006).

As shown in Chapter Six, one weaknesses of the tourism industry in Oman is its lack of policy and evaluation studies pertaining to socio-cultural and socio-economic aspects of the local hosts. Also, it has been confirmed that tourism development is epitomized by lacking comprehensive practical sustainable development plans. Lately in Oman, there has been a relative increase in the level of infrastructure and tourism superstructure planned to support the growing tourism industry; however, many of the assigned development areas lie in rural areas with strong indigenous socio-cultural values. These values have been listed as one of the challenges to counter the Omanization processes in

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the tourism industry in general, including PIN as a profession (Ministry of Tourism 2004a), especially amongst communities living outside the capital area. For example, in regard to tour guidance, AM18 confirmed the following:

There is a huge misconception about the role of the tour guide. I have evidence for this from interviews we have done and a lot of training sessions that we have organized at MOT. There is a misconception about the job as a tourist guide; a lot do not want to work as a tourist guide; they think it is a low job.

Parallel to this, Din (1989) argued that different religious backgrounds between hosts and guests may influence the services supplied to the guests in certain Muslim countries where in some cases tourism is discouraged because of its impact on local communities. However, according to the current facts in Oman, the tourism industry could represent a threat to Islamic cultural values and social traditions by providing for the secular hedonistic needs of the tourism market such as internationalized resorts and bars with international service standards, e.g. Ras al-Jinz. That is to say, presently, religion and other socio-cultural values in Oman exert limited influence on the operation of tourist-related activities as implied by AM9. This is not surprising since the lack of Omani expertise has resulted in the employment of foreign labour forces and consultants for planning, marketing and advisory services which are western-oriented to provide for the secular needs of the tourist-originating countries (see Section 6.6).

By adapting standardized Western designs without considering SCC, it is expected that violations of Islamic values can be opposed by conservative members of the Omani society and develop negative repercussions and a possible feeling of xenophobia as is

\[204\] For instance, in al-Sharja, UAE, the sale of alcoholic beverages was banned in the early 1980s for religious reasons (Sharpley 2002: 227).
the case in Egypt (Aziz 1995) and Malaysia (Din 1989, Henderson 2003). In the long run, this can be in conflict with the community development paradigm for tourism (Liu and Wall 2006), including community readiness to involve in PIN. This has already been reported by experts at Ras al-Hadd and Ras al-Jinz (Ministry of Tourism 2004b). Also, Rashid al-Hatimi (personal communication: 06/January/2006), a local inhabitant, mentioned that some visitors to Wadi al-Ayn tombs walk accidentally on the Islamic cemetery which is located at the bottom of the site. Therefore, the promotion of ‘responsible tourism’ (Jenkins 1994: 6) was supported by some respondents (e.g. AM12).

7.3. SOCIO-POLITICAL ISSUES AND PIN

In Oman there is a reciprocal relationship between heritage PIN and the socio-political status where the revival of some bygone cultural patterns of heritage into public displays may produce ‘hot interpretations’ (Uzzell 1989b: 33). Herein, PIN could bring back some undesired ‘patrimonial preservations’ of what the community is trying to forget and to leave behind in order to move forward (Jafari 1996: 45).

Accordingly, some respondents were concerned that PIN planners need to consider this interwoven connectivity and sensitivity if an appropriate interpretive provision is to be accomplished. In Oman, ‘while democratic debate is encouraged in Oman, the society

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205 Sadly to say this has continually been linked negatively to Islam ‘as a religion of strict taboos’ (Aziz 1995: 92). This suggests the need for a new interpretive strategy which can enhance Muslim images and promote Islamic societies as peaceful, welcoming destinations. Needless to say that due to the political conflicts status in the Middle East, some respondents, e.g. AM7, believe that it is important to explain to the European people that there are other countries in the region, such as Oman, where people are tolerant and understanding. AM10 shared this view and mentioned that ‘Oman is politically stabilized and safe which is an essential element in tourism development. People here in Oman do welcome people from all cultures; hospitality level is very high’.

206 For instance, Dubai has a liberal attitude towards alcohol and nightlife which could cause offence to some Dubai residents (Horner and Swarbrooke 2004).
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as a whole strongly rejects anti-social acts which are not intended to serve the greater good’ (Ministry of Information 2005: 30). As in other neighbouring countries in the Arabian Peninsula, where the society is tribally-based in nature (Miles 1919), in Oman the tribe represents ‘the backbone of Oman’s social structure’ (Ministry of National Economy 2003a: 194). Some archaeological sites are located within tribal domain or belong to a group of people who do not wish to interpret them to the public (AS4). Herein, ‘all, part, or none of these cultural and spatial zones may be shared with tourists’ (Jafari 1996: 46).

The sensitivity against some of AH evidence for socio-political reasons is also reported by some respondents. For instance, AM19 referred to some rock inscriptions, writings and drawings where some of these materials represent original historical records for the social, cultural and political conditions in Oman (e.g. tribal wars). This may explain why some of these inscriptions have been ignored or vandalised by some people as confirmed by AM19. Also, AM21 referred to the problem of representing al-Balid history in PIN where various tribes are involved.

One of the major issues in PIN is the heritage internationalisation and ownership when a particular AH is connected to wider groups of people from the global village such as those sites and objects with religious values (Wallis and Blain 2003, Schadla-Hall 2004). According to Insoll (1999: 8), archaeological study of religious sites is a complex affair, and for this reason the bigger picture is often avoided as a taboo subject. A related example to this issue is the Jewish Cemetery (maqbarat al-yahud) and the Jew

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207 To manage this issue for instance, the Royal Decree 16/2001 was issued to prevent this conflict in regard to the four frankincense World Heritage Sites, Khor Rori, al-Balid, Wubar Shisur and Wadi Dawkah.
House (*bait al-yahudi*) in Sohar. While some respondents believe that Jewish archaeological sites are part of the Omani heritage which needs to be interpreted to the public properly. Nonetheless, some of them are worried that this kind of PIN might generate and provoke undesirable sensitivity (AM9, AM17, AM18, AM30, AS1, AS3, AS5, AS11). This might due to the ongoing Arab-Israeli political conflicts in the Middle Eastern region (Ministry of Information 2004: 31).

Another possible reason, and similar to the Islamic archaeology (see Section 2.5.2), this might due to those factors mentioned in chapter five and six as confirmed by AM13. For instance, except for some recent initial research that was conducted by Aviva Klein-Franke (personal communication: 02/August/2006), there are no proper previous studies for the Jewish heritage, including the cemetery and the house in discussion (see Klein-Franke 2006).

Other socio-political issues in regard to AH interpretation were highlighted by Potts (1998). For example, in regard to Magan culture, many respondents assured that Magan has to be interpreted and promoted as part of the Omani heritage (AM13, AM20). Yet, Potts (1998: 195) asked a sceptical question, i.e. ‘Do the modern inhabitants of the UAE and Oman identify themselves with the land known in cuneiform sources as Magan [knowing that] the Arabs did not arrive in the region until sometime late in the pre-Islamic era?’ Potts (1998: 196) continued his argument by writing:

> Lowenthal (1998: 26-35) argued that stewards of heritage need to learn how to strengthen their heritage through interchanging and sharing with others, because if ‘self-centred interpretation’ takes over, heritage will be in danger of becoming sterile or unproductive. Also, Carr (2004: 434) mentioned that an ‘appropriate, authentic interpretation has been regarded as a means of enhancing cross-cultural understanding and improving the quality of the visitor experience’.

As more and more evidence of Harappan civilization\textsuperscript{210} is discovered in the Oman peninsula, some worry has been expressed that local Indian and Pakistanis expatriates...will contend that the original pre-Arab population of the area was Hindi. This, they feel, would unleash a terrible situation in which claims for prior ownership would be made, something to be avoided at all costs.

Also, some respondents talked about the interpretation of ‘colonial heritage’ and non-Arabic AH. For instance, AM6 referred to the Portuguese Forts in Oman. Besides, for Oman there is no doubt about the great influence of Persian culture on Omani tangible and intangible heritage through the ages as this can be seen in such archaeological sites as Qalhat (al-Zadjali 1997, Bhacker and Bhacker 2004, Costa 2004) and Bahla Fort, especially the oldest part known as al-Qasabah (AM6). Again, Potts (1998: 196) asked ‘what is the attitude of Arab nationals today to the Persian elements in their archaeological records’, including Oman\textsuperscript{211}.

7.4. ALTERNATIVE INTERPRETATIONS FOR AH IN OMAN

As discussed in Section 3.6.3, alternative archaeology should be an indispensable part of any PIN as there is no one meaning and wholly objective account to be discovered in the past. According to the findings, local communities have differing interpretations for what happened in the past at some archaeological ruins based on such factors as religion, politics and superstitions. These interpretations have been socio-culturally constructed and handed on from one generation to another.

\textsuperscript{210} The mature phase of the Indus civilization, flourished in the Indus river valley during the third millennium B.C in northeast Pakistan (Possehl 2003).

\textsuperscript{211} Again, this claim can be rejected based on the fact that some respondents confirmed that even Islamic archaeology in Oman is underdeveloped and that archaeological research and literature are mainly focused on pre-Islamic cultures (AM13, AM35, BX5, BX9, AS3).
Chapter Seven: The Socio-cultural Context

Considering alternative interpretations may foster sense of pride, authenticity, partnership and stewardship amongst the indigenous communities. In fact, the alternatives represent valuable resources for many primary interpretations. Al-Shahri (1992: 22) in his research about the ancient tombs in Dhofar region wrote:

*To archaeologists studying the life, customs and traditions of the ancient Dhafari, the graves and tombs of the region’s ancestor are of crucial importance.*

Therefore, Tosi (1976) emphasised that the application of data gathered from anthropological research should be considered when interpreting Oman’s AH. Also, based on their fieldworks, AM10, AM33 and BX3 consider ethno-archaeological studies necessary for understanding AH in Oman. However, similar to many other inter-disciplinary researches, ethno-archaeological studies yet to be developed in Oman. Oman is a country where culture is still very lively and strong. The people are attached to their sacred places and the majority of the local communities have their own interpretations for archaeological ruins (AM10). Some of which are based on religious beliefs and/or mixed with inherited superstitious tales that might have various levels of certainty depends on time and place.

One of the themes in alternative archaeology in Oman is ancient knowledge and power where ‘ancient people are seen as endowed with greater knowledge and power than contemporary civilizations’ (Schadla-Hall 2004: 257). To exemplify, the inhabitants of

212 For example, one of the ethno-archaeological studies that might help in understanding the social and economic aspects of the past is Lancaster and Lancaster’s (2002) study in Ja’alan area, eastern Oman, in relation to the trade and exchange networks which has been seen as crucial to the development of social institutions in the societies of the past. Also, BX3 wrote: ‘There are the agricultural settlements of the local inhabitants of Oman and the U.A.E; they are the key to our understanding of the archaeology of the Hajar region [Oman] and of an early civilization in the Arabian Peninsula.’

213 Some of the rock arts in Oman are connected to some traditional myths. For example, the anthropomorphic figures at the massive boulder of Hasat Bin Salt in al-Hamra area are interpreted by two supernatural stories inherited by the people in al-Hamra itself and by the elders in Nizwa (Reade 2000).
Shir believe that a legendary tyrannical giant called Kybaykeb built the ancient towers for his own use (BX5). The legend which tells the story of Kybaykeb, the owner of a magical sword, and a local Bedouin called Qadi is well known amongst the locals (al-Taie et al. 1997). Similarly, in Dhofar regions it is believed that some graves called asbaheeta were built overnight by jinn\(^{214}\) (i.e. spirits) who ‘possessed the unusual power to build them overnight’ (al-Shahri 1992: 25)\(^{215}\).

Also, AS11 reported that the people of Salalah used not to enter al-Balid because they think it is a cursed city. Sometimes, such local interpretations are underpinned by historic sources as Zarins (2001) mentioned in regard to Shisur Wubar which was discovered in the early 1990s. During that time, it was announced in the mass media that the ‘Lost City of Ubar’ had been found in Oman which probably represents the Kingdom of Iram, the people of Ad’s land, which is mentioned in the Holy Qur’an (Chapter 89: Verses 6-9) and doomed by God because of its disobedience and sinful ways (al-Taie et al. 1997, Zarins 2001). However, some scholars argue that there is no evidence that Shisur Wubar was once a city called Ubar, although it was probably a caravanserai on overland frankincense trade routes (Stewart 2004).

A very important point to be mentioned here is that ‘when archaeological enquiry leads to conclusions contrary to the claims of a community of faith, then it is important not to underestimate the robustness and adaptability of religious discourse’ (Bergquist 2001:

\(^{214}\) A plural for a jinni, which in Islamic and Arabic culture, is ‘an intelligent spirit able to appear in human and animal form’ (Soanes 2003: 602).

\(^{215}\) Also, although there is no scientific evidence, there are some tombs which are believed to belong to Messengers of Allah mentioned in the Holy Qur’an such as Hud, Job, and Imran. People of Dhofar region greatly respect these tombs. They pay them regular visits and regard them as sacred places to perform vows and sacrifices; despite the fact that these practices contradict the teachings of Islam (see al-Shahri 1992).
185). This is important to be remembered in both primary and public interpretations as religion represents one of the utmost driving forces in the Omani society. Certainly, local alternative interpretations need to be balanced with other scientific interpretations for the past. Paul Yule (personal communication: 02/July/2006) wrote:

_In Muslim countries, archaeology already faces a socio-cultural challenge in the face of a growing disenchantment with western values...Archaeologists are neither for nor against Islam. Their questions are individual and cannot be classified in a simple way._

To explain more, the interconnection between archaeology and anthropology is undeniable. Through the history of archaeology, the principles of the _Evolution Theory_ are used to interpret archaeological records through physical, social and cultural anthropological theories (Trigger 1989, Schnapp 1993, Bahn 1996, Gosden 1999). This theory has no support in Islam; similar to the Biblical account of human origin, it is considered as one of the anti-religious ideology (Trigger 1989: 102-103); hence, _Creationism_ has clashed with archaeological interpretation since the middle of the nineteenth century... [and] emphasized that humans, along with other living things, were directly created by God in much the same form as they are today (Skeates 2000: 100). Therefore, Muslims ‘oppose evolutionary theories, perceiving them to be a direct threat to their religious faith’ (Skeates 2000: 100) because they ‘shift the power of God to nature which is considered as independent of Him’ (Nasr 2006: 57). According to the Holy Qu’a’an (2: 34), Allah created the first man on Earth from scratch. He did not evolve him from any other of His creation (see Abdul Wahid 2005).

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216 ‘ Archaeology is anthropology or it is nothing’, a statement with which many archaeologists would strongly agree (Gosden 1999: 2).

217 For creationists or religious believers ‘their views are not myth but eternal truth, and it is the nature of such truths that they are subject neither to verification, nor falsification’ (Montagu 1984: 7).

218 In the same context, Islamic religious art avoided recreating the human form for that was thought to be God’s prerogative only. God alone is the Creator or the “Fashioner.” Calligraphy, in addition to vegetal and geometrical designs, became a way of artistic expression (Neill 2006).
In regard to this subject, the real problem here 'lies not only in deciding what messages about the past should be communicated, [but] how these meanings should be explained to others' (Ucko 1996: ix). In this matter, Jeffery Rose (personal communication: 25/June/2006) believed that 'Omanis aren't against evolution; they just don't understand the relationship between creation of Adam in the Qur’an and biological evolution'.

AM18 mentioned ‘if you don’t provide people with information, they will try to find these information in their own way’ which sometimes might result in misconception of the religious texts, in particular the Holy Qur’an and the sayings of the Prophet, Hadiths. For instance, in Sahih al-Bukhari219 (Khan 2006), one of the Prophet’s disciples, Abdullah bin Umar, narrated:

> When the Prophet passed by (a place called) Al Hijr220, he said, "Do not enter the house of those who were unjust to themselves, unless (you enter) weeping, lest you should suffer the same punishment as was inflicted upon them." After that he covered his face with his sheet cloth while he was on the camel-saddle.

This hadith can be misinterpreted by some people to the extent that might prevent them from visiting archaeological sites using the Prophet’s commands as evidence. This is despite the fact that the Holy Qur’an encourages Muslims to learn from archaeology, but without admiring those people who disbelieve in Allah (AM4).

In line with this, some respondents mentioned that one of the common alternative interpretations or misnomers for archaeological sites amongst the public in Oman is the concept of al-Jahiliyah which usually means the pre-Islamic period or the ‘age of

219 The title of the books of Hadiths compiled by Muhammad ibn Isma’il al-Bukhari, a scholar (see Salafi Publication 2006).
220 Located in the north of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; alternatively it is called Mada’in Salih
ignorance' (Potts 1998: 195). In this context, Mowayiah Ibrahim (personal communication: 07/June/2006) said ‘our understanding of al-Jahiliyyah led to our ignorance of important material culture of Arabia before Islam’\(^{221}\). To exemplify, most of the tombs and graves in Dhofar region have been identified as pre-Islamic monuments (al-Shahri 1992).

Also, the prehistoric tombs at al-Ayn and Bat are commonly known as Qoboor Bani Juhal which means the tombs of ignorant people (Rashid al-Hatimi: personal communication: 06/January/2006). According to some respondents, this has negatively affected archaeological fieldworks at some sites as BX9 reported that the work at al-Ayn was once objected to because of ‘the danger of a Jahil in the grave’. Also, Yule and Weisgerber (1998: 238) reported that the damage to the towers at Shir ‘may be connected with a fear of jinn on the part of the local population’. Another example for the misnomer and mystification in interpreting archaeological sites by the locals in some region of Oman is pointed out by BX4 who wrote:

*People have tales in their minds about the presence of the Persians sometime in history. Therefore, they explain all old remains as built in the Persian Period*\(^{222}\).

This is not surprising as there is no active public archaeology as discussed in Section 6.3.1; thus, it takes much time and effort to convince the public about archaeology, especially the prehistoric societies (AM19). Herein, Bergquist (2001: 185) argued that ‘the rigorous scientific approach of modern archaeology can lead to some neglect of

\(^{221}\) Potts (1998: 195) wrote ‘In a region which has yielded only a small number of inscribed objects, it is easy to see how traditionalists could dismiss entirely the pre-Islamic era as Jahaliyya’.

\(^{222}\) For example, the locals in Zukait, Izki area, think that those third millennium B.C tombs (Yule and Weisgerber 1998) or as they called them *booms* were built by Persians who used to extract and manufacture copper in the past (Saif al-Riami: personal communication: 23/September/2005). The status is the same at such sites as Dhabk al-Furs or ‘the Persian Castle’ in al-Hamra area (AM30).
things that may seem irrational'. In this case, conflict may arise in case the discovered information appears to underestimate beliefs or practices as AS11 reported that some local people at Khor Rori opposed the archaeological excavations due to their social and cultural reservations. Hence, to avoid such sensitive conflicts Bergquist (2001: 188) suggested a 'negotiated consent' or 'bilingualism of discourse', scientific and religious. For instance, AM33 talked about the locals in Ras al-Jinz who are now familiar with archaeologists and their fieldworks.

7.5. ARCHAEO TOURISM AS A SOCIO-CULTURAL PHENOMENON IN OMAN

It has been confirmed in Chapter Five that the current status of PC of archaeological sites represent one major challenges for PIN provision and consequently for domestic archaeotourism in Oman. Although, the lack of public archaeology as discussed earlier in Section 6.2.1 is a major element in the underdeveloped status of archaeotourism in Oman, the findings show that public apathy about AH is another influential socio-cultural factor as well. In practice, as in many other Muslim countries, in Oman although Islam encourages travel, it has little influence on the mode of tourism development (Din 1989). Some authors recount that Islam enjoins particular types of travel, such as the pilgrimage to Mecca (hajj), which have retained an important religions and social function (Aziz 1995, Timothy and Iverson 2006)223.

According to the Holy Qur'an and Hadith, Muslims ‘should travel in order to visit friends and relatives and fully appreciate the beauty of God’s world’ (Henderson 2003: 448), either in the realm of past or present. In this sense, ‘whatever tourist attractions the

223 In some cases, ‘the motive behind a pilgrimage is similar to that behind a tour’ (MacCannell 2004: 199).
traveller sees [they] should make him/her more aware and appreciative of Allah’s greatness’ (Din 1989: 554). Indeed, Islam as a religion is not against tourism\textsuperscript{224}; conversely unlike the commercial goals of modern mass tourism, it does encourage purposeful tourism that brings people socio-economic benefits as long as it is not against Islamic regulations and mainly motivated mainly by pleasure and hedonistic pursuits (Din 1989).

In the present, although the majority of the Omani public realizes and appreciates all previously-mentioned values in regard to Islam and tourism; however, there are a few who in practice observe these values in their daily lives. For instance, AM18 mentioned that ‘there are a lot of people who actually think that tourism is a waste of time. There are people within the Ministry of Tourism who do not believe that tourism is an important activity’.

Today, Omanis walk nearby or through past archaeological sites every day, but know nothing about how they were created and transformed to their current condition. The intangible national and universal concepts of AH, e.g. pride, aesthetic, have not been enforced through PIN for the tangible features of AH. To be more specific, despite the valuable values of AH, travelling to learn from the past for present and future benefits has little influence on the mode of domestic archaeotourism (AM9, AM3, AM5, AM13, AM30, AM34, BX5, BX9) even with religious provocative propagation. For instance, Yule and Weisgerber (1998: 238) mentioned that in regard to Shir tombs ‘although these tombs were known amongst the local population, there was little public notice of

\textsuperscript{224} For instance, in Islam travellers are excused from many duties which are obligatory when they are not travelling, e.g. postpone fasting Ramadan and shorten or combine prayers.
them until the early 1990’s’. Also, Gerd Weisgerber (personal communication: 17/March/2006) asserted that at Bat ‘it was a surprise that most of visitors were Germans or Austrians’. As well, AM28 confirmed that only a few people from Sohar visit Sohar Fort and Arja (see Section 6.3.1).

In this part, it is confirmed that similar to PIN as a profession, archaeotourism as a culture is not a popular mainstream or a social and recreational activity amongst the general public in Oman. It is unusual to find Omani families visiting archaeological sites (AS9, AS13, AM30). For instance, the Survey of Salalah Khareef Visitors 2007 (Ministry of National Economy and MOT 2008) confirmed that 93.17% of Omani visitors described ‘weather and natural views’ as the most satisfactory things in Salalah. However, in regard to ‘religious and archaeological sites’, in particular, only 0.25% of the Omani visitors in 2007 included these sites as one of the satisfactory factors in their visits to Salalah. Mainly, the Omani tourists who visit archaeological sites can be described as culture-peripheral tourists (see Section 3.2.2) where archaeological sites do not represent a main motive to visit a destination as it is the case in Ras al-Jinz (Khamis al-Amri: personal communication: 11:08:2008) and Shisur Wubar (Mabrook Bayit-Misan: personal communication: 11:08: 2008). The public in Oman appears to be more enthusiastic for leisure travel (inbound or outbound) than any other kind of tourism (Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Ministry of National Economy 2002, Ministry of National Economy and MOT 2004, Ministry of National Economy and MOT 2006). Visiting relatives and friends (VRF) comes next in order which might be
underpinned by the Islamic values to strengthen the bonds of Islamic society (Ministry of National Economy 2003a).225

Also, the *Household Travel and Tourism Survey 2000*, which was conducted by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the Ministry of National Economy (2002: 17-23), shows that in regard to the internal trips or inbound tourism, it appeared that the main purposes for travelling amongst the households (Omani and non-Omani) are recreation, leisure and vacations during the weekends or holidays. As for the international trips or outbound tourism, the survey illustrates that VRF, recreation and leisure and shopping are respectively the main three purposes for travelling.

Also, in regard to museums, some respondents claim that in addition to the physical access barriers (see Section 6.3.6), there are psychological access barriers (McLean 1997) to museums which are envisaged by the public as the venues of cultural authority and touristic space (AM19, AM31, AM36). In comparison with natural history museums, it appears that museums with archaeological and historical collections are less visited by the public in Oman (Figure 7.1).

225 In 1999 and 2000, the Omani government conducted several household statistical surveys that covered various standards among which is living, household expenditure and income, time use, leisure time use and travel and tourism. With regard to activities, the surveys show that men spend three times the amount of time women spend on reading, sports and leisure time activities. Men also spend 18% more time than women on social visits, 13% on learning and 14% on travelling and touring. In comparison, women spend 20% more time than men on watching television and 29% on socializing with family members (see Ministry of National Economy 2003a).
Chapter Seven: The Socio-cultural Context

As well, opposite to archaeological sites, some respondents assured that the majority of Omani people are more interested in visiting forts and castles in particular (AM9, AS6). In fact, some people disregard archaeology and archaeological materials (AM3, AM19)\(^{226}\), they consider it against modernization (AS4). Also, there are those people who are against exhumation and link archaeology to grave diggers, treasures hunters and bone collectors (AS9, AM33)\(^{227}\). Another respondent mentioned that there are some Omnis who mix archaeological interpretations with myths and supernatural spirits (AM35). In many times, these misunderstandings has resulted in conflicts between archaeologists and the locals\(^ {228}\) as happened in Khor Rori (AS11).

One possible reason for this as expressed by AM21 is that ‘most people are not interested in the past because they don’t understand it...To them the past is dead and has no relation to their living’. AM20 confirmed this and added that as it is in Arabian

\(^{226}\) Du Cardi’s (2003: 18) describes the relation between the public and archaeology in the Arabian Gulf Countries, including Oman, by saying ‘The past in terms of public consciousness rarely exceeded a couple of centuries, and was usually seen in ethnographic terms as the traditional way of life which had changed little from one generation to the next.

\(^{227}\) In line with this, Broadie (2005: 130) assured that the public keenness for archaeology ‘is often sparked by the perceived romance of treasure hunting and the challenge for archaeologists are to redirect this enthusiasm’.

\(^{228}\) Saif al-Riami (personal communication: 23/September/2005) reported that once there was a British expedition in the 1970s came to Zukait, Izki area, when the locals thought of them as a group of thieves.
Peninsula, archaeological ruins and historical monuments represent usual sceneries to people in Oman which makes them unattractive. In another word, archaeological sites do not capture the imagination - tourist gaze (Urry 2002). Therefore, archaeology does not represent a priority in their daily living requirements either for local communities or administrators; they have their own interests and issues to deal with, especially in less developing countries (AM10, BX7)\textsuperscript{229}.

Indeed, such issues as intellectual and physical accessibility to and within the sites, travelling expenses, and buying or renting equipment are some of many other economic difficulties facing the low income of major percentage of families in Oman\textsuperscript{230}, especially in the lack of governmental and social or welfare agencies that support what is known as 'social tourism' (Murphy 1985: 23)\textsuperscript{231}. This was confirmed by AM21, AM29 and AM31 and by the Human Development Report (Ministry of National Economy 2003a: 64) which concluded that:

\textit{Omani's satisfaction with their living standards appeared less than average (47 on a scale that ranged between zero and 100)...In general, to raise the level of Omanis satisfaction with respect to their living standards, more attention should be directed to improve social security, economic opportunities, housing etc.}

There is no doubt that those mentioned socio-psychological, cultural and economic factors might deprive, directly or indirectly, the enthusiasm to develop in-country training programs in public archaeology, to provide interpretive services at

\textsuperscript{229} It has been argued by Aslan (2005) and Daher's (2006) that in the Arab region the preservation of cultural heritage resources is challenged by local social, cultural and political conditions.

\textsuperscript{230} It can be said that this socio-economic status due partially to the fact that most Omani people still prefer to join the public sector rather than starting their own business where 'the Government continues to be a major actor in generating income and providing job opportunities to citizens' (Ministry National Economy 2003a: 37).

\textsuperscript{231} According to Murphy (1985: 23), social tourism 'involves the provision of vacations for people who can afford them only with the aid of a third party...to extend the benefits of vacations to a broader segment of society'.

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archaeological sites and sequentially to hinder or even halt archaeotourism in Oman. Therefore, it is vital that these factors need to be addressed by SSC in Oman, especially that there are some people who are interested in developing the primary and public interpretations of AH in Oman (AM6, AM32, AM33, AM35, AS1, AS6).

In regard to this, the findings pointed out two particular underdeveloped channels in Oman, namely mass media and education, which are crucial in avoiding being trapped by existing interpretations for the past, maximizing self-guided constructive reification and minimizing the processes of sedimentation (Crotty 1998).

7.6. THE MEDIA AND PIN OF AH IN OMAN

The role of the media in interpreting and presenting AH to the public has long been realized by people in such sectors as education and marketing (see Chapter Three). Herein, the term ‘the media’ or ‘the mass media’ means ‘the various modes of channels of communication as an industry in the public domain’ (Nielsen 2001: 24) which include such media as print media, broadcast media and internet.

Since its early beginning in the 1970s, two of the main aims for the Omani media are to inform the public and to promote sense of national identity by encouraging citizens to play an active part in the country’s development (Ministry of Information 2004). The media has proved to be effective in Oman as a tool for PIN of AH as this confirmed, yet, some respondents, especially those who has previous fieldworks, mentioned that working with the media is difficult and limited in motivating and attracting the public to visit archaeological excavations and understand archaeology (AM6, AM19, AM23,
AM28, AM30, AM32, AM35, AS1, AS6, AS11, AS13, BX5, BX9). For instance, AS9 talked about the excavations at Bausher where there was no continuous support for archaeologists to survive the site.

More evidence was provided by AM21, AU4 and AS10 who confirmed that the promotional publications for the World Heritage frankincense sites are limited and seasonal, particularly during al-Khareef season. Also, in regard to Ras al-Jinz, AM33 mentioned that TV has never been there since a long time ago.

That is to say, the role of the Omani media is underutilized as an educational and promotional medium for AH in Oman. This is not surprising as the archival files for the Ministry of Information show the limited number of documentary films and programs concerning AH in Oman in the period from 1975 to 2004 (AU5)\(^{232}\). According to official statistics, 32.2% of the Omani national radio and television’s programs are classified as ‘religious and cultural’, 20.2% as ‘recreational and art’ and 3.4% as youth and sports (Ministry of National Economy 2003b: 3-21). Also, there is no independent public printed media or internet media specializing in Oman’s archaeology or history (Ministry of National Economy 2005b: 1-12).

Some respondents referred to the fact that the Omani media is intensively oriented more toward presenting and promoting other natural and cultural attractions, such as living heritage and castles (AM3, AS2). Other respondents criticized the poor quality and desultory inaccurate isolated context of the presented information to the public (AM14, AM28, AM30, AM32, AM35, AS1, AS6, AS11, AS13, BX5, BX9). For instance, AS9 talked about the excavations at Bausher where there was no continuous support for archaeologists to survive the site.

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\(^{232}\) For example, in 1989 the national TV presented two short films titled ‘Ancient Mining in Oman’, 14 minutes and 15 seconds and ‘Bat and Bahla’, 8 minutes and 47 seconds.
Chapter Seven: The Socio-cultural Context

AM35, AS5). Waleed al-Tikriti (personal communication: 03/March/2006) shared these perspectives and added:

*The media people do not always care about the scientific side of the subject. Some of the journalists rely on their own sources without proper investigations.*

Additionally, some of the published information is out of date (AM30). According to AM33, ‘if you look at the books, they are all repeating the same things that we have done 20 years ago’. Furthermore, a number of respondents referred to the problem of limited published materials about AH in Arabic and plain language (AM6, BX7). Currently, most of the published materials about archaeological excavations are published in foreign languages and made in scholarly print media which might be unavailable in Oman, incomprehensible for the non-specialists and unaffordable for the majority of the public.

For instance, AM8 pointed out the absence of publications about Magan culture and its interpretation in the Omani print media. As well, in regard to the broadcast media there are no available documentary films and promotional materials about mining history in Oman (AM9) or Bronze Age settlements, such as Bat area regardless its universal significance (AS3).

Although some respondents believe that the Ministry of Information is largely responsible for this issue as mentioned above, others blamed MOHC for being not cooperative with the media (AS5). Another practical reason could be that in Oman there is only one national TV channel and one radio station which have their designated
policies and priorities by the government (AMZg)\textsuperscript{233}. Additionally, AU5 listed the following problems facing the Omani media in regard to PIN of AH:

- Lack of awareness among the people in charge of the media about AH values in practical sense.
- Limited financial resources to produce programs about AH in Oman.
- Limited technical facilities.
- Lack of specializing staff in heritage resources in general.
- There is the problem of bureaucracy.

In many cases, and as the next section evidences, the underutilization of the media in communicating and developing the values of archaeotourism is strongly connected to the poor presentation and PIN of AH in the Omani education system. This comes from the fact that the media is one of the vital tools in informal education as this has been discussed in Chapter Three.

7.7. EDUCATION AND PIN OF AH IN OMAN

Earlier in Chapter Six and in this chapter, the findings confirmed the limited role of informal education\textsuperscript{234} in Oman in communicating AH through public interpretive practices and approaches, both on-site and off-site. According to Light (1995: 124), informal learning is both a motive for and a requirement of visiting heritage sites’. This

\textsuperscript{233} Currently, the Ministry of Information has offered the opportunities for the private sector in Oman to establish private TV and radio stations to play a part in the Sultanate’s media. The private sector involvement is strongly encouraged and supported by the Royal Decree No. 87/2004 which amended the Law on Printed Matter and Publication and the Royal Decree 95/2004 which promulgated the Law of Private Radio and Television Establishment (Ministry of Information 2006: 69).

\textsuperscript{234} According to Light (1995: 117), informal education can be defined as ‘the self-motivated, voluntary, exploratory, non-coercive learning and understanding which can take a place during a visit to a heritage site’.
suggests the needs to provide appropriate PIN through active public programs in the media or museums for instance as this has been repeatedly confirmed by respondents (AM9, AM21, AM35). One important reason for doing this is that there is a general lack of knowledge about the national history of Oman among the public (AM6) and interest in archaeology is limited to those with appropriate educational background (BX1).

A very pressing issue in regard to PIN of AH via the informal education in Oman is the high level of illiteracy, especially in the rural areas where few people are able to communicate through printed media. For instance, in 2000 the illiteracy rate among people 15 years and above stood at 26.4% (Ministry of National Economy 2003a: 35). So, it is not surprising that the majority of respondents asserted that educating the public is a priority to construct a proper insight about AH. For example, at al-Balid area, AM21 mentioned that ‘education is the biggest thing. You have to educate people, till they become interested’. Also, AM33 pointed out that the people in Ras al-Jinz ‘have not been educated for archaeology’. In another word, the development of PIN of AH in informal education can be attained gradually through well-designed and long-term formal and informal education.

The importance of this sector comes from the fact that according to the official statistics, a major part of Omani society is young (see Section 2.3). The Ministry of Education estimated that the grand total of students’ number during the school year of 2004/2005 is ca. 597,534 at both the basic and general education establishments (Ministry of Information 2005: 96-97). This is without counting the students at the higher education institutes, either public or private.
The importance of this comes from the fact that the awareness about the value of AH and other heritage resources in Oman should start from the preliminary level of formal education (AM24). Therefore, the World Heritage Convention of 1972 (World Heritage Centre 2005) and ICOMOS charters (1993) emphasized that each State party should provide information on education (primary, secondary and tertiary) and information programs to strengthen appreciation of heritage resources. However, and according to ICCROM’s report, ‘a serious deficiency in organizing educational activities for professionals in the Arab countries is the relative lack of published material in Arabic’ (Aslan 2005: 13). In regard to Oman, the Human Development Report (Ministry of National Economy 2003a: 35) recorded that:

*There are deficiencies in the quality of education particularly in the educational content that leads to skills and capabilities formation.*

As for PIN of AH, the findings show the absence of practical relationship between AH and school curricula (AM3, AM10, BX5, BX8, BX9, AS10, AS11) where there are only a few teachers who are interested in involving archaeology as a subject in their curricula (AM35). For instance, al-Kharoosi’s (2002) research showed the underdeveloped role of the current history curriculum in Oman in raising the awareness of secondary school students about the heritage tourism in Oman.

At that early time in the 1970s, and because of the lack of qualified Omani experts in designing and teaching history curricula, recourse has been taken to the importation of Arabic-speaking educationalists and history scholars, e.g. Egyptians and Iraqis. Usually, these educationalists and scholars arrive with no knowledge of local history and
archaeology and believe nothing existed in the Gulf in the days when ziggurats and pyramids loomed large in their native lands (Potts 1998).

Nowadays, school students learn about AH of Oman (e.g. Ministry of Education 2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2005, 2006), but there is little knowledge of historical sequence beyond. There are a lot of gaps in teaching history through archaeology where many periods are not included in the school curricula, such as the prehistoric time (AS9, Gerd Weisgerber: personal communication: 07/June/2006). Herein, the sense of chronological sequence has not been featured properly to the students where the concepts of time and change, cause and effect are underdeveloped.

For instance, in regard to Magan cultures, teachers of history are still depend on the positivistic approach rather than constructivist in communicating its archaeological evidence; they depend on one-way communication where there is only general information (AM30, al-Kharoosi 2002) or ‘statement of facts’ (Tilden 1977: 8). According to Gyimothy and Johns (2001: 247), ‘these scholarly educational displays with dry factual information might hinder rather than facilitate understanding’ (Tilden 1977: 8). This is beside the low quality of historical information presented in history curricula about archaeological sites (AM6, AM13, AS11) which are ill-presented, poor, old, repeated, disorganized and inaccurate contents (e.g. Ministry of Education 2000, 2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2005).

235 Due to the lack of awareness and specialized teachers in archaeology, the misunderstanding of the evolution theory may represent one example for the exclusion of some prehistoric periods, in particular the Paleolithic period which is the longest in human history (Fagan et al. 1996).

236 It might be similar to what Ham (forthcoming) called Didactic Paradigm to PIN which depends on the principle ‘if they know what we know, they’ll care as we care’.
Some respondents referred to the importance of field visits by school parties and hands-on experience instead of class-works, theoretical pedagogical methods and memorization rather than on-site visits and interactive hands-on experience (AM3, AM31). The on-site visits and 'activity-based learning' can contribute to an understanding of changes, growth and decay of archaeological sites and objects and help students to understand the background to the present cultural environment (Prentice 1995: 148).

Also, as mentioned by some respondents, school field visits are mainly focused on forts and castles rather than archaeological sites (AS8). Similarly, although there is no entrance fee (AM36)²³⁷, museums with historical and/or archaeological exhibitions are less popular among school parties (Figure 7.1). According to the official statistics, the number of students who visited forts and castles were 24,953 in 2002, 31,696 in 2003 and 28,857 in 2004 (Ministry of National Economy 2005b: table 6-21). According to Mohammed al-Busaidi (personal communication: 07/January/2006), although the teaching guide-books for history curricula encourage teachers to manage some field visits outside the class, yet some teachers are unable to do so because of teaching load, big number of students, limited time and limited financial resources.

Furthermore, the problem of training in specialized education and shortcomings in teaching skills seems to be basic general issues even for other available subjects because of the rush works in spreading education and speeding up of the Omanization in the

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²³⁷ Also, it should be mentioned here that museums with archaeological findings are limited geographically to three main cities in Oman, Muscat, Salalah and Sohar.
teaching profession (Ministry of National Economy 2003a). Other possible reasons for this are the lack of on-site interpretive plans, site development and management (see Chapter Five and Chapter Six) and limited co-operational joint programs between the Ministry of Education and MOHC (AM10 and AM13). This status might suggest the lack of understanding of the educational market by both archaeological sites managers and museum curators.

Because school students are tomorrow’s constituency, accurate knowledge about AH may be an important component in the development of meaning-making. In addition to al-Kharoosi’ s (2002) study, some respondents, such as AM30, AS4 and AS11, asserted the need for an independent curriculum that links the young generations to AH through educational tourism. However, this does not seem to be an easy option as this might be faced with such problems as the overcrowded curricula (Stone and Mackenzie 1989, Skeates 2000) and the educationalists’ interest in archaeology as a new subject, not to mention the availability of job-related trainings for the new subject, archaeology.

7.8. SUMMARY

This chapter emphasized that SCC represents a demanding and driving influential factor in the current underdeveloped PIN for AH and archaeotourism in Oman. Thus, considering SCC is a prerequisite to surmount many issues relative to PC and SSC. For instance, understanding the constructed values and education system are two

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238 A huge quantitative expansion has taken place in the field of education from only 3 primary schools with 900 students in the early 1970s to 1,181 schools in 2004/2005 with about 598,336 students (309/709 male and 288, 627 female) receiving education at various levels (Ministry of National Economy 2005b: table 4-19).

239 Skeates (2000: 116) talked about this by saying ‘Over-crowded educational curricula and under-informed teachers often exclude archaeology as a ‘luxury’ subject of little relevance to today’s society’. 
cornerstones to achieve sustainable PIN and community archaeotourism as discussed in Chapter Three and confirmed in this chapter. Understanding SCC is necessary to prevent negative inputs and outputs, to reinforce positive outcomes and to empower local people to become protectors for AH in their areas as well as decision makers. Some of the archaeological sites mentioned in this research, such as Ras al-Jinz and al-Balid, have already been considered in tourism development plans. However, and according to the findings, there are critical unresolved gaps in regard to SCC which has resulted from the lack of balance between the current needs of SSC and local communities.

Part of the issue is the absence of systematic pragmatic research which aims at raising the awareness of the tourism planners and achieving a win-win relationship among all involved stakeholders in developing heritage tourism in Oman in general. For instance, secular interpretive needs should take into account the various Islamic injunctions and respect other Omani constructed socio-cultural lifestyle. Also, negative cross socio-cultural conflicts between local hosts and other stakeholders may stem in the future from denying social and cultural benefits for the locals at such visited sites as Wadi al-Ayn, Ras al-Jinz, Qalhat, Shisur Wubar and Bahla.

Additionally, this chapter illustrated the limited role of the media and current education system to promote and relate AH to people's life and make them appreciate its value in a practical sense. This is important as the public in general does not seem to care for

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240 This is not a unique situation to Oman; the lack of community participation in many developing countries in the tourism industry is 'a reflection of prevailing socio-political, economic and cultural structure' (Tosun 2000: 613).
archaeology and its resources in comparison to other heritage resources. For instance, the historical and religious significance of some forts and castles in the Omani living heritage as sources for pride and nationalism is nothing but evidence for the importance of social constructed values in the Omani SCC. Certainly, this has led to consider Nizwa Fort in al-Dhakhliyah region, which has significant religious and political symbols in the Omani history, as more connected and related to the current living society than a prehistoric archaeological site, regardless its national or universal outstanding values.

The findings show that AH scientific significance for a particular part of AH could be a presumed extrinsic value amongst archaeologists where other stakeholders and their perspectives, such as the locals, are excluded. In another word, archaeology and its products are disconnected from the holistic social system, except for few people. Accordingly, there are no collective agreements, shared realities (Crotty 1998) or shared intentionality (Searle 1995) where certain aspects of our world come into being as a result of the combined intentionality of those who make use of them. Therefore, other alternative interpretations were gradually constructed which might be influenced by religious and superstitious thoughts.

By now, it has been confirmed that all factors mentioned in PC, SSC and SCC do influence one another. This suggests the need for a holistic integrative approach to be considered if effective and appropriate interpretive practices are to be successfully accomplished. Therefore, the next two chapters will deal with this issue in an attempt to develop a practical approach for PIN of AH in Oman guided by the research findings and the available literature.
CHAPTER EIGHT
TOWARD AN INTEGRATIVE APPROACH TO PUBLIC INTERPRETATION FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE IN OMAN

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Chapter Eight: Toward An Integrative Approach to Public Interpretation

CHAPTER EIGHT
TOWARD AN INTEGRATIVE APPROACH TO PUBLIC INTERPRETATION FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE IN OMAN

8.1. INTRODUCTION

In order to sustain the quality of PIN, there are many issues, interfaces and techniques to improve the performance and achieve competitive advantage. This chapter will attempt to provide an operational definition for PIN of AH in Oman. It proposes and describes an alternative viable interpretive approach for AH in Oman so as to sustain archaeological sites and simultaneously develop archaeotourism. It is hoped that the approach will assist to minimize the number of impediments discussed in the last three chapters.

In addition to the research findings, this chapter will benefit from secondary sources to assist in the conceptualization, description and validation of the argument in discussion. It should be mentioned that this chapter does not aim at designing an interpretive plan or prospectus for a particular archaeological site since ‘the strongest planning approach will be the one that is most appropriate for a particular project’ (Brochu 2003: 15). Moreover, any master interpretive plan is a collective dynamic team-work and a multi-discipline profession (Bradley 1982) so as to reduce subjectivity, enforce sustainability and create a win-win relationship among all involved stakeholders and actors.

8.2. TOWARD AN INTEGRATIVE INTERPRETIVE APPROACH FOR AH IN OMAN

The research findings have critically postulated the adaptation of an alternative wider planning strategy in interpreting AH resources to communicate their myriad values to
Chapter Eight: Toward An Integrative Approach to Public Interpretation

the public. This strategy should be designed with serious consideration for the ‘whole context’ and the ‘whole person’ by not underestimating the factors discussed in chapters five, six and seven. The findings show that these two aspects are dramatically influenced by the current factors within the three contexts, i.e. PC, SSC, SCC.

These contexts influence PIN of AH at two interdependent dimensions that are the Micro-impact of the Three Contexts and the Macro-impact of the Three Contexts (see Figure 8.1). The Micro-impact refers to the local context which includes the various factors of the three contexts in the surrounding cultural landscape in which a particular AH is situated. The Micro-impact differs from one area to another. For example, the rural PC of Bat or Bahla Fort differs from that of Bausher area which is located in a semi-urbanized area in the capital city. Likewise, SCC can be slightly different. For example, most people who live nearby Bat almost belong to one tribe, al-Miqbali. However, in such a semi-urbanized area as Bausher it is expected that the population is heterogenous, Omani and non-Omani, with different tribes from all over Oman. The case is the same concerning SSC where Bausher, for instance, can be easily accessed and monitored by AH stewardship since it is located in the capital itself, meanwhile sites, such as Bat and Shir, are comparatively less manageable due to their locations in peripheral areas.
As for *Macro-impact*, it includes such factors as macro-economy, socio-political status, mass media, national policy, strategy, vision and development plans, in particular those which are related to the tourism sector or heritage management. Also, other influential factors concerning the *Macro-impact* are international agreements, the international changeable market and nearby competitive destinations which can play a major part in interpretive plans\(^\text{241}\). Certainly, the *Micro-impact* can not be separated from *Macro-impact* of the cultural landscape since every site is naturally interacting dynamically.

\(^{241}\) The *Macro-Impact of the Three Contexts* is of a big important in Oman where a centralized governmental stewardship for AH and tourism sector is strongly supported and implemented. Although, there are regional directorates for MOT, yet they operate within the national governmental strategy, regardless their special local requirements (Ministry of National Economy 2001). In such a status, both the *Micro-impact* and *Macro-impact* are of a particular archaeological landscape need to be managed in a compatible complementary way and cope with each other through suitable integrative planning approaches.
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with its macro-context which can be national, regional or even global. Thus, as these two dimensions are strongly interdependent, they need to be addressed and considered simultaneously before, while and after developing and implementing PIN strategy for any AH.

In addition to the various related issues to the three contexts, the current lack of quality interpretive approach has been strongly associated with the shortcoming of quality management plan for heritage tourism in general and archaeotourism in particular (see Chapter Six). The incapability of securing an advance, comprehensive and consistent quality management process constitutes the major weakness of local, regional and national interpretive plan for AH resources. This is despite the fact that *The Final Priority Action Plan for Tourism Development in Oman* (Parsons International Limited 2002: 1) reported the following:

*Oman’s competitive strengths in the Middle East market are its potential to provide the greatest diversity of products and experiences in this region and the rich traditional nature of its cultural and heritage assets.*

Today, as supported by the findings, PIN of AH in Oman is totally depending on positivistic and informative approaches instead of being constructivist and interactive (Figure 4.2) where visitors are not encouraged enough to construct understanding and meanings about the interpreted site or presented object within museums through heuristic processes. The current presentation of AH cannot be distinguished from other forms of information transfer where ‘the interpretive approach’ (Ham 1992: 8), which is characterized by having a theme and being pleasurable, relevant and organized, is underdeveloped.
Also, PIN can be described as ‘operations planning-type’, e.g. al-Balid, which has been used ‘to fill in the gap between having an interpretive plan and no planning at all’ (Brochu 2003: 20). It has a limited relationship to management mission and objectives, message, media and market. Besides, here the personal, social and physical contexts are not practically considered. Moreover, it is official-led PIN (Price 2006) or contract PIN which basically means an organization carrying out the work of PIN where community PIN and participation is limited.

Archaeotourism should not consider archaeological landscape only, but also other kinds of attractions, especially that the field observations at all of the selected sites for this study illustrate their integral connections with their cultural landscape components, including natural, living and built heritage. For instance, the present marine environment and living heritage at Ras al-Jinz, as Cleuziou and Tosi (2000) mentioned, are two integral parts in AH interpretations in this area. This connectivity has been part of the unique characters of Oman’s archaeology (see Section 2.6) and one main motive for archaeologists to consider studying Oman’s archaeology to interpret the past (Tosi 1989).

Considering the whole context by using a holistic integrative approach in interpreting AH to the public could increase the sense of the interpreted place through the past representatives, archaeological resources and the present representatives, natural and living resources (see sections 3.5.4 and 4.3.4). For instance, the four frankincense sites, Khor Rori, Wadi Dawkah and Shisur Wubar, can be thematically connected to today living heritage in Dhofar region where the visitors can observe and participate in
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frankincense harvest season and experience the ancient routes from Khor Rori to Shisur Wubar. Doing so will provide interpreters with more opportunity to reveal the meanings of AH and relate them to visitors and their hosts lifestyles. In this regard, Uzzell (1998b: 245) mentioned:

Although the visitor can get a great deal out of the interpretation of any one site, the whole is much greater deal out of the interpretation of any one site; the whole is much greater than the sum of the parts. The true significance of the site (the keynote) only becomes apparent if the visitor can appreciate it in a larger context.

Therefore, the findings have stressed the necessity to introduce a new workable approach and practices for PIN to support this competitive strength as the current positivistic, operational and official-led approaches to PIN have failed to communicate the potential of AH values. This has been espoused by many respondents (e.g. AM21, AM25, AM6, AM32, AM34, AM35, AS1, AS6, AS11) who incited the need for a different compelling mechanism that can integrate AH with the ‘whole context’ and address the ‘whole person’. For example, AM18 referred to the importance of utilizing geological resources and living heritage in interpreting AH in Oman as there are only a minority of tourists who would like to visit archaeological sites alone (see Sections 6.3.1).

AS13 thinks that integration is important, especially for remote sites, such as Shir. As well, AM30 believes that by considering an integrative approach in PIN, such issues as the lack of attractiveness might be solved. Yet, so far there are no integrated interpretive themes capable of incorporating all these elements to provide a sensible experience and practical approach. In Oman, every archaeological site is seen as a single unit with no linkage with its surrounding cultural landscape components. Archaeological sites in
Oman are visited by tourists as a part of pre-made packages despite the lack of PIN. In another word, they represent *culture-peripheral* attractions (Hughes 2002) rather than core attractions. There are few core-cultural tourists, mostly specialists, who only come with the intention to visit a particular archaeological site *per se* (AM34).

Also, the findings put more emphasis on the importance of SCC in particular, as a demanding factor in achieving a sustainable interpretive strategy by considering the local alternative interpretations and raising the public awareness of AH via education system and the local media. Accordingly, and based on the above, the researcher proposes an integrative approach that can develop PIN of AH in Oman and boost archaeotourism. Consequently, it is hoped that the factors with negative-impact to be addressed and managed and various values can accrue for all the involved stakeholders.

**8.3. THE NEED FOR AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO PIN OF AH**

The literature suggests different reasons\textsuperscript{242} for the importance of using holistic integrative approaches or Integrated Quality Management, IQM, (European Commission 2000a) in developing and managing heritage tourism to raise the competitiveness of a particular destination. Five of these reasons are:

- Heritage tourism is one sector among others in the tourism industry which in return should not be de-contextualized from national policies, other development sectors, supporting facilities and services, and environmental and social context (Cossons 1989a, Inskeep 1991, European Commission 2000b) and thus, this could bring more balanced touristic development (Cater 1987).

\textsuperscript{242} Saxena et al. (2006) suggested five benefits for integration approaches which are: economic, experiential, conservation, development and synergistic.
Natural resources, cultural traditions and a whole range of integrated tourism enterprises have an influence on visitor experience and ‘Value Tourism Chain’ (European Commission 2000a: 15) where the total travel experience is dependent on all the links in the ‘experience chain’ (Ritchie and Crouch 2003: 213). For instance, ‘bundling’ strategy in heritage tourism can be more realistic, cost-effect option and create a more appealing new product that benefits consumers and suppliers (McKercher and du Cros 2002: 112).

Cultural heritage attractions may serve a multitude of user groups who may value them for different reasons and seek different benefits as well making the task of presenting the attractions appropriately more difficult (McKercher and du Cros 2002: 7). Thus, Boyd (2002: 226) expected that ‘building partnerships is perhaps the one which may influence the direction of heritage tourism in the future’.

Tourists are moving from mass consumption to Post-Fordist consumption and more flexible system of production and organization (Urry 2002, Daher 2006). They have become much more sophisticated consumers with specific needs (European Commission 2000a, Richards 2000, Novell and Benson 2005), especially in this globalization era (Hollinshead 1997). They are looking for
uniqueness of the experience (World Tourism Organization 2005) and ‘for the authentic experience to escape the anomie of the modern world’ (Harrison 1997: 25).

The adoption of integrative mechanisms could support resources sustainability (Butler 1999, European Commission 2000a). For instance, the multi-roles status for tourism in the less favoured and peripheral areas has been improved and strengthened by the introduction of such integrative approaches as the Integrated Quality Management (European Commission 2000a, 2000b, 2000c).

Based on the above, it was argued that planning, designing, managing and evaluating PIN of AH should be addressed through integrative holistic approaches where a whole context and the whole person are considered (see sections 3.5.4, 4.3.3 and 4.3.4). However, searching for the whole in PIN is hard (Tilden 1977) where for instance ‘partnership works better in theory than in practice’ (Craik 2004: 53). Integration could become a challenging complicated strategy that requires effective practical partnership, team-work efforts and interdisciplinary approaches (see Section 3.4).

To achieve this, some integrative approaches have been developed by practitioners and scholars based on their theoretical and practical research in PIN. Briefly, the following

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247 Tourism in general has been advocated as efficient way to promote the development of less favoured regions (Hohl and Tisdell 1995, Ribeiro and Marques 2002, Williams and MacLeod 2005).

248 According to Prideaux (2002: 381), although peripheral areas generally are regarded as those located some distance from the center of tourism activity, accessibility is also a determining factor in defining the periphery.

249 Prideaux (2002) argued that possession of an interesting landscape, old building, unique event or historic landscape is no guarantee that tourism will flourish in peripheral areas; however, success has much more to do with such issues as marketing, pulling power, viability and informed management. To do so, Prideaux (2002) suggested the integration of four critical factors which are: 1) location and access; 2) community support; 3) operating economies and management of the attractions; and 4) supporting tourism infrastructure in the surrounding area.
section highlights some of the suggested approaches followed by a critical overview based on the literature and the research findings.

8.3.1. An Overview of the Integrative Approaches in PIN

According to the Oxford Dictionary (Soanes 2003: 581), to integrate means 'to combine or be combined to form a whole' or 'to bring or come into equal participation in an institution or body'. Literally, and in regard to tourism, Butler (1999: 67) defined the integrated planning and development as 'the process of introducing tourism into an area in a manner in which it mixes with existing elements'.

Oliver and Jenkins (2005: 27) included that in tourism the term 'integration' is both fluid and evolving where it becomes widely defined from being used to mean the integration of tourism into broader economic and social development contexts, goals and decisions to emphasize the importance of local participation and control in tourism management and development (see also Mitchell and Eagles 2001).

As the increasing espousal of using integrative approaches and practices has become a common trend in tourism planning and development, it is not surprising that a wider integrated approaches to heritage PIN is also adopted. This comes from the fact that

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250 Oliver and Jenkins (2005: 27) define 'integrated tourism' as: 'Tourism that is explicitly linked to the economic, social, cultural, natural and human structures of the localities in which it takes places where it has clear connections with local resources, activities, products, other production and services industries and a participatory local community'.


252 For example, in Britain integrated interpretive planning is widely applied (Broadhurst 1989) to such sites as Castell Henllys (Mytum 1999, 2000, 2004), Roystone Grange, West Stow Country Park and Anglo-Saxon Village News (Pearce 1990) and Hadrian's Wall (Turley 1998, Stewart et al. 2001). A good example is the HERIAN project which aims at interpreting the South Wales industrial heritage (see http://www.herian.org/). Similar to Wales, an integrative approach was used in Ireland as a strategy to
'the task facing the interpretive planner is to insure that all possible factors are addressed' (Bradley 1982: 83). Yet, there are a few practical studies and models in regard to the application of integrated holistic approach in PIN (e.g. Broadhurst 1989, Veverka 1994, Goodey 1996, Orams 1996, Stewart et al. 2001, Beck and Cable 2002a, Brochu 2003, Copeland 2004, 2006). For instance, an earlier model was proposed by Gabriel Cherem in 1977 (Figure 8.2) which beside the site itself, it includes the managerial realities as a major components in planning processes.

![Figure 8.2: Cherem’s (1977) model of PIN (modified after Veverka 1994: 26)](image)

Probably, the interest in presenting a holistic PIN goes back as early as Tilden’s work (1977: 8) who stated that the true interpreter goes ‘beyond a part to a whole’. This perspective was repeatedly emphasized later by several scholars, though in different terms. For example, Stewart et al. (2001: 343) referred to the perceived values and importance of choosing a ‘dispersed planning approach’ in promoting sustainable and cost-effective PIN as opposed to the traditional centralised one at the Brecks develop rural Ireland in order to assist in developing a coherent national scheme of PIN in which duplication is avoided (Philips and Tubridy 1994).
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Countryside Project in Eastern England. This approach ‘makes use of existing interpretive provision at various points throughout an area through enhancement, networking, integration and partnership’ (Stewart et al. 2001: 343).

Also, Beck and Cable (2002a: 47) illustrate the importance of presenting a whole picture and interpreting to the whole person; they referred to this as the ‘holistic approach’. Similar to this, Copeland (2006: 89) linked the efficiency and the adoption of ‘big concepts’ in interpreting historic landscapes in particular, which allow the visitors to gain incremental knowledge of the evidence in the landscape and ensure that they do not see every heritage venue as a special case separate from the evidence of all the other sites, but as part of a wider historic environment.

For scholars, such as Goodey (1996: 303), the concept of an integrated PIN is ‘an essential characteristic of interpretative planning’. Aldridge (1975) emphasized the importance of integrated regional approach for interpretive planning as a strategy to avoid duplication of financial aid, artefact collection, effort by the agencies involved and visitor experience. Also, Copelle et al. (1989: 116) referred to the need for ‘coordination between agencies in planning the visitor experience on a regional basis...Each resources area is unique and some themes are better represented in certain areas than others in a given region’. Also, two different advantages for this wider planning were mentioned by Cooper (1991) which are:

- It allows the development of themes and sub-themes regionally which can be linked to the marketing of the destination.
- It acts as a catalyst for public and private sectors cooperation.
Furthermore, following integrative strategies and group partnerships to heritage, PIN could be a major source for new internal and external funds as it is the case in the UK (Broadhurst 1989). To accomplish this, Broadhurst (1989) suggested three main processes which focus on identifying 1) opportunities and resources required; 2) resources and benefits amongst potential partners and 3) suitable mechanisms for services delivery.

In line with this, Veverka (1994: 87) refers to the use of a wider macro-type and a resources-based interpretation, ‘the Interpretive Systems Planning’, as a way of looking at the entire system of interpretive agencies, sites and opportunities around the interpreted sites. It is a way of thinking about the total system and its components where ‘a detailed system interpretive plan’ is needed (Capelle et al. 1989: 115). According to John Veverka (personal communication: 18/November/2006), this approach is ‘the same as for doing an individual site interpretive plan, but instead of park sites we inventory interpretive sites, facilities and features within a larger system’.

To facilitate the applicability of the Systems Approach, a thematic PIN or structured interpretation is used to link all various selected sites by a main theme (see Section

253 Take south Wales as an example where ‘the 1990s saw the virtual disappearance of deep coalmining and the steep decline of steel-making and related manufacturing industries’; some 90,000 jobs were lost in the region between 1978 and 1987 (Dicks 2000: 10). However, ‘the opening of Big Pit as a Mining Museum in 1983 and the conservation of Blaenavon Ironworks have contributed to economic regeneration’ (Blaenavon Partnership 1999: 10). Working through integrative approaches and partnership, the Interpretive Plan for the South Wales Industrial Heritage Initiative is widely contributing to the survival and revival of the declining industrial heritage (PLB Projects Ltd and Govannan Consultancy 2003). For example, the Big Pit Mining Museum generates export revenue and jobs in a location where there are few alternatives other than living on public welfare. Besides, ‘as time has passed and the memories of coal have diminished, so the Big Pit Mining Museum has acquired a growing heritage value’ (Wanhill 2000: 68).

254 McKercher and du Cros (2002: 112) suggested that the bundling within a cultural tourism context ‘helps create a theme for a place, creating a stronger sense of destination for the tourist by invoking many places with similar meanings’.
3.8.1) which is in return composed of several interconnected sub-themes (Veverka 1994). Interpreting a range of sites in order to develop a thematic PIN over a wider historic landscape ‘would greatly enhance the opportunities to introduce visitors to the evidence of the evolution of settlement and land use’ (Binks 1986: 43). Themeing interpretation (Ham: forthcoming) has an administrative role where it helps interpreters in determining the required information and research for a particular presentation, as well as the desired message to be communicated (Cooper 1991, Ham 1992). It also assists in preventing contradiction and emphasizes on cohesion where various data gathered from different sites integrated into a cohesive holistic context (Ham 1992).

Moreover, by doing this, PIN may include the less spectacular and visited sites which may not be included according to their physiographic appeal or remoteness for instance. These sites could offer first-hands experience and the opportunity to develop themes and stories in an effective way, especially in the countryside areas (Binks 1986). Wickham-Jones (1988) argued that ironically at many of the smaller archaeological sites PIN provision could be cheaper and simplest, but these are often left for until the last. Also, thematic PIN might provide the opportunity for the utilization of other natural, cultural and physiographic resources, historic stories and facilities (Capelle et al. 1989, Veverka 1994). This could be one advantage for community tourism in the marginal areas\(^{255}\). Capelle et al. (1989: 116) added that inter-agency interpretive planning on a regional basis ‘makes evaluation of interpretive plans and programs easier

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\(^{255}\) For instance, the Jordanian government has been attempting to develop a northern touristway through the Jordan River Valley that integrates the valley’s archaeology and other heritage resources as one way to sustain these resources and increase community development and participation in less visited areas (Shunnaq et al. 2008).
and more meaningful by pointing out excessive duplication and omission within the interpretive system.

Also, Knudson et al. (2003: 309) mentioned that the system interpretive plan ‘abets cooperation and operates in line with the way visitors act and perceive a tourist destination’. The System Approach is one of the few practical mechanism utilized in PIN planning and it has been very successful in the U.S.A and Canada as well (Capelle et al. 1989). A similar integrative approach was proposed by Uzzell (1998b) aims at creating a high-quality psychological, social and contextual experience for visitors. Uzzell (1998b: 233) talked about a holistic model which ‘seeks to provide a framework for incorporating within one model all the significance inputs and outputs required to plan a successful cognitive, effective and behavior interpretive experience’.

Uzzell (1998b: 238) suggested that interrelationship between themes, markets and resources is required and that the interaction between these elements defines interpretive outcomes where ‘each of the three elements should only be seen in the context of their relationships to the other two elements’. Goodey (1996: 304) thinks that although Uzzell’s model is an information gathering device, rather than a system model, yet it ‘has been used as the sole tool for determining the form and function of many heritage and leisure facilities’.

A more recent approach for interpretive planning was developed by Brochu (2003) called the ‘5-M Model’ which emphasizes the importance of integrating five major

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256 Resources, e.g. sites, staff, media, the management structure, marketing programs, the financial base, intangible resources; Market, e.g. size of market, visitor profiles; Themes, e.g. stories, messages.
interrelated elements in planning PIN which are: management, message, mechanics market and media. One of the main problems facing this model, as Brochu (2003: xxii) acknowledged, is that it was not based on scientific or academic research; rather, it is the result of her own experience.

8.3.2. A Critical Overview

Although PIN is an integral part of the tourism industry, generally, there is a limited literature available about the application of integrative approaches and practices to this profession (Goodey 1996, Brochu 2003). There are even fewer profound and lengthy studies that explore and apply the concepts of a 'whole context' and the 'whole person' in interpreting heritage resources in particular, including AH, which are indispensable part of the wider tourism industry (Ted Cable: personal communication: 23/February/2007).

Mostly, scholars are more focused on the theoretical part, yet not enough delineated and tested. For example, although thematic PIN, which is widely used in integrating various different sites, has theoretical grounding in cognitive psychology, social psychology and persuasive communication, it has not been adequately examined in practical interpretive settings (Tarlton and Ward 2006). Also, it is noticeable that evaluation is mostly audience-oriented; however, a sustainable approach to PIN would evaluate the influence of the final outputs on all involved aspects in delivering the interpretive plan, e.g. resources, management, media, audience (Brochu 2003). In another word, it should consider the micro-impact and macro-impact of the provided PIN on PC, SSC and SCC and vice versa.
Uzzell (1998b: 236) criticized the current interpretive plans by arguing that 'the planning process is treated linearly while in practice the process is necessarily more recursive and iterative'. In congruent with this, Hall and McArthur (1998: 187-190) referred to similar related issues that inhibited the recognition of PIN as a main tool in heritage management. These issues can be summarized as follows:

- The limited integration into the core business of heritage management. There is little to no systematic approaches being undertaken to develop, implement and improve PIN.
- Most theories about PIN have not been produced by interpreters where there is a gap between those generating theories (e.g. academics) and those generating delivery (e.g. practitioners).
- For many heritage management organisations PIN is only a visitor service.
- A reluctant to write measurable objectives or performance criteria that could be used to evaluate and make subsequent improvement to interpretive planning and provision.
- Poor linkage with other related disciplines such as marketing.

Also, Jenkinson (2004: 22) attracted the attention that 'the medium seemed to dominate the professional's view of interpretation' which means the control of the medium over the intended message itself. Also, in the practical sense, 'the success of too many heritage projects is jeopardized because insufficient attention is given to the planning stage' (Uzzell 1998b: 234). A critical issue in PIN is the common use of generic perspectives and models in developing, planning, designing, managing and evaluating interpretive planning for all resources without taking into account the unique
characteristics of every interpreted resource. This refers to the increasing needs for speciality in interpretive planning and the adoption of ‘idiographic approach’ (Babbie 2004: 19) or PIN for a particular site rather than applying nomothetic explanations and ‘standardized interpretation’ which might result in duplication and predictability (Aldridge 1989: 86)\(^{257}\). Herein, ‘the concrete uniqueness of a site is important rather than an abstract universal characteristic’ (Lew 1987: 555).

Being holistic does not mean context-free where one approach is viable and valid for all types of attractions at any time and place. Every interpretive plan for heritage resource has to be context-oriented which requires a specific detailed interpretive mechanism of integration to reach to an interpretive provision that is characterized by acceptability, efficiency and harmony (Butler 1999). In line with this, Prentice and Light (1994: 210) assured that ‘clearly, different types of heritage attraction will be interpreted in different ways’. For example, the literature shows that some of the main issues in regard to AH in particular, are the excluded past, alternative interpretations, authenticity and gender issues. Such issues might not be of a big concern when interpreting natural parks.

The current approaches for PIN are mainly oriented toward the survey of the components available in PC and SSC where the local community awareness, educational level, values and the alike are barely included theoretically and practically. SCC, as this study argues, could be easily underestimated in the current generic interpretive approaches for cultural heritage sites and sights.

\(^{257}\) Aldridge (1989: 86) argued that ‘because interpretation is an art, it is naive to think that it can be done scientifically and objectively’ to become standardized interpretation.
Shanks and Tilley (1992: 116) mentioned that archaeology 'is unavoidable social [because] its data are the product of social practices'. Similarly, PIN is 'a social activity for an individual, a group or an audience' (Tilley 1989: 280). This means a fixed imported generic interpretive approach to AH from one context might fail in another because every interpretive plan needs to be socially constructed via collective shared agreements. This highlights the importance of considering the dynamic nature of interpretive approaches where it is developing and changing continually according to the components of both the micro and macro contexts of AH. Thus, an interpretive team needs to realize the local demographic and psychographic characters, religious beliefs and social systems, as well as to ensure understanding and acceptance of diversity of traditions in interpretive programming (Zuefle 1997).

Different places and people need to be interpreted differently according to their special context. It is therefore misleading to describe PIN as an undifferentiated activity. As repeatedly discussed in Chapter Three, and confirmed by the research findings, SCC in particular, is of a special priority and becomes more important in less developed countries as in Oman. Hence, the application of integrated interpretive approaches to AH in Oman requires an alternative perspective copes with its special unique needs. Herein, as Aslan (2005: 12) wrote 'socio-cultural development can and should be integrated into conservation planning'.

This leads the discussion to the lack of literature that addresses PIN as an industry or as a professionalism in relation to heritage-tourism in developing countries. Robinson (2006: viii) mentioned that 'it would be true to say, certainly from a European
perspective, that when we think of tourism in the Middle East we generally conceptualize it as a number of destinations’ where the complexity and richness of histories and cultures is reduced to a relatively small number of images and signs. Accordingly, this neglects the diversity of landscapes, sites and location which in return has led to poor understanding for many other destinations within this region (Daher 2006, Robinson 2006). This issue has become very critical, especially that many of these destinations, such as the Arabian Gulf States, are growing touristic areas.

Relatively, this might explain why the majority of the references in this research, for examples, are mainly written by western and western-oriented scholars deal with issues related to developed countries. Therefore, the outcomes of these studies need to be carefully used and applied to other countries with different contexts, such as Oman, which imposes the application of hermeneutic-based approaches to PIN. Sayer (1989: 167) mentioned that ‘to interpret nature in the Third World will mean a major new learning process for us in the West’. The same can be presumed about archaeological resources where archaeological research and management vary between one region of the world and another (Herrmann 1989) due to their different micro-contexts and macro-contexts. For example, the economic long-term vision of an oil-dependent country, such as Oman, differs totally from that of the United Kingdom. The similar can be said about the national policies, education, religion and the alike. Again, despite its importance and influence on the market, the consideration of the macro-context of PIN plan is also rarely discussed in the related literature.
Uzzell (1989a: 4) believes that 'the rationale and raison d'etre of interpretation is now more extensive and complex'. Therefore, PIN, as a growing profession, is required to develop and update its approaches in both practical and theoretical sense periodically and sophisticatedly. It needs to move step forward toward specialty than generality whereupon complicated issues, as shown in chapters five, six and seven, can be properly addressed and managed.

In addition, the world has become a global village under the globalization umbrella. If competitiveness is not counted as one of the long-term agenda in heritage PIN, then crucial issues in the tourism sector, such as sustainability, authenticity and quality experience, will be threatened. This is also important in order to cope with the dynamic development strategy of changeable tourism market (Hollinshead 1997, Richards 2000, Prentice 2005). Therefore, 'a plan is never complete; there will always be a need for revision and improvements in planning' (Bradley 1982: 85).

8.4. THE INTEGRATED CONTEXTS PUBLIC INTERPRETATION (ICPI)

As none of the interpretive approaches mentioned in Section 8.3 seems wholly satisfactory in the context of AH in Oman, the remainder of this chapter will propose an alternative approach for PIN of AH in Oman called The Integrated Contexts Public Interpretation (hereafter ICPI). The approach is guided by the research findings and the related published literature. The issues discussed in Chapter Three and in sections 8.2 and 8.3 are taken into account. It is hoped that this approach has the ability to address and manage these issues without compromising the integrity of AH and its wider context.
8.4.1. The Conceptualization of ICPI

ICPI can be identified as a holistic interpretive perspective that considers an integrative approach for guiding the planning, designing, managing and evaluating of PIN for AH where both ‘the whole context’ and ‘the whole person’ are two main principles necessary to communicate the myriad tangible and intangible values of a particular archaeological resource. ICPI is meant to lead to multiplied effects by playing multiple-roles within the wider context in which it is situated. In this term, ICPI works as a complementary system where ‘a holistic thinking is central’ (Patton 2002: 120); a system which is made out of different physical elements (e.g. heritage attractions), stakeholders and values, however through a well-studied strategy. Herein, ICPI is proposed as a means of thinking critically and comprehensively about the actors, resources and linkages involved in PIN of AH.

In harmony with the discussion above, and based on integrative strategy to PIN, in ICPI an archaeological site is not an isolated interpretive unit from its surrounding archaeological landscape\(^{258}\) and the wider cultural landscape\(^{259}\). An archaeological site is a record for a historical event which happened in the past in a particular place, but ‘neither sites, nor their people ever exist in a vacuum’ (Fowler 1981: 62). Thus, ICPI aims at integrating AH of a particular area with other heritage natural and living components within its wider cultural landscape through creating systematic interdependent linkages. Herein, an interpretive plan endeavours to introduce a site or a

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\(^{258}\) The term archaeological landscape here means different sites with similar and/or different physiographic features and chronology within a particular area. It is part of the wider cultural landscape.

\(^{259}\) The cultural landscape includes different types of heritage resources such as built-heritage, natural heritage and living heritage.
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group of sites into the overall plan and total development strategy of a particular area, but in a cohesive manner.

The interpretive team is encouraged to consider the broad chronological bracket, not only the particular period in which an archaeological site was formed or reformed. AH must be seen as a complementary part of the present rather than secondary by-product where it becomes a part of the whole interpretive system. However, its unique features need to be presented\textsuperscript{260} as PIN ‘can help foster uniqueness’ (Stewart \textit{et al.} 2001: 346). The system or network here is perceived ‘as a number of interrelated components that have discrete boundaries’ (Fagan \textit{et al.} 1996: 246).

It is intended that ICPI helps to communicate an overall awareness about other heritage resources in the vicinity of the wider context of the interpreted AH, tangible and intangible ones. It asks all those involved in PIN to be holistic and collective rather than selective in planning interpretive services and products by considering the remote and less visited sites for instance. Herein, archaeological sites need to be included to communicate sense of a particular place through ‘a combination of heritage and contemporary lifestyle’ (Smith \textit{et al.} 2006: 113). This must be a basic for any presumed integrated \textit{cultural tourism landscape}\textsuperscript{261} (Jafari 2001) in which the site is only one interpretive unit within a whole wider interpretive system (Figure 8.3). It is one touristic chain in the total experience of a particular visitor which starts from his/her actual visit.

\textsuperscript{260} According to Oliver and Jenkins (2005: 27), a successful integrated tourism trajectory depends on dedicated and specialized production rather than generalization and standardization.

\textsuperscript{261} It includes the heritage attractions within a particular cultural landscape in addition to the interpretive provision, touristic infrastructure and superstructure.
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 Depends on visitors and their personal context (Falk and Dierking 1992), it can be either a core or peripheral attraction. Also, it can be a part of one or more guided themed trails.

Figure 8.3: The dynamic interaction between archaeological landscape, cultural landscape and cultural tourism landscape.

Also, in regard to audience, ICPI emphasizes the importance of the previous experience and constructed values of visitors and it aims at improving the quality of what is provided for them so they come back again or recommend others. ICPI also stresses the importance of giving all audience the opportunity to be part of the interpretive scheme and interactive rather being passive participants.

Additionally, ICPI addresses and minimizes the current impact of those discussed factors in chapters five, six and seven, as well as it aims at developing archaeotourism in Oman in particular, and heritage tourism in general. Both the Micro-impact and the
Macro-impact of PC, SSC and SCC should be highly considered and audited where a particular interpretive plan must be customized and cautiously integrated. In this sense, ICPI underlines the role of PIN as a sustainable tool that is congruent with the primary aims of integrative approaches in tourism. It is a sustainable approach where the interpretive planning is implemented and managed in a way that physical, stakeholder and socio-cultural values and courtesies are not damaged, but as possible sustained and strengthened. For instance, ICPI aims at lowering the total reliance on top-down development plans for PIN and ensuring the active involvement of local people and local tourism enterprises in planning and managing the site. Hopefully, this will maximize retention of profits from the capital investment made and give the locals more control over interpretive infrastructure, touristic facilities and services development and operation.

ICPI does not aim to enforce a mandatory relationship, but to establish a long-term understandable connection and partnership that sustains archaeological resources and their surrounding better than a mandatory policy. For instance, as the findings show, even with a legal instrument such as NHPL 1980, an archaeological site can not be sustained or enlivened without raising the awareness of local communities and teaching them about archaeology through effective off-site and on-site PIN\textsuperscript{262}. In this term, ICPI strongly values the high significance of SCC as a basic dimension in any interpretive plan where the impact of any interpretive plan is properly managed and continuously

\textsuperscript{262} Article (7) of the ICOMOS Charter of Archaeological Heritage Management 1990 (ICOMOS 1990) highlights that: 'The presentation of the archaeological heritage to the general public is an essential method of promoting an understanding of the origins and development of modern societies. At the same time, it is the most important means of promoting an understanding of the need for its protection'.
ICPI is a macroscopic strategy to remember all constituents that should affect the decision-making processes while interpreting AH. The cultural tourism landscape is a multi-stakeholders ownership where there can be various constructed values and orientations. Mainly, the essential principle of ICPI is to communicate these various values to all these stakeholders which depends on PIN plan. To explain more, one of the related critics for PIN is the ‘manipulation of information’ and that the gatekeeping role of interpreters can be abused (Cooper 1991: 229). Hence, the success of ICPI relies on several interdependent stakeholders which underscores the need for an integrative strategic planning. Interpreters and other specialists, including archaeologists and tourism planners, should welcome the involvement of the local participants intellectually and physically.

Based on the above, and similar to the Integrated Quality Management approach, ICPI aims at: 1) working together to a strategy, 2) delivering quality at all stages of the visitor experience, and 3) strengthening and installing effectively quality management and monitoring processes (European Commission 2000a). In this term, ICPI encourages an overall understanding of the dynamic basic principles and processes of integrated site management approaches. Yet, it should be emphasized that ICPI is not a led approach; it is far wider in its application than assuring product or service quality and visitors satisfaction. The researcher has drawn on primary and secondary resources as a
springboard for the proposed approach, given the limitation of theory and practical practices related to PIN (Figure 8.4).

**Figure 8.4: Some of the approaches used to build ICPI**

**8.4.2. The ICPI Model**

The purpose of suggesting a model for ICPI is to resemble the meanings illuminated in Section 8.4.1, as well as to provide a guided framework for the development of PIN in Oman. The model of ICPI approach portrays five major processes which are briefly illustrated in Figure 8.5 and more delineated in Figure 8.6. As it appears clear from the figures, the suggested model is recursive and iterative which reflects the dynamic nature of PIN planning and the contexts in which it is operating. To explain more, the following sections will provide a description for each stage in the model.
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Figure 8.5: The main five processes of ICPI model in Figure 8.6
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Figure 8.6: ICPI Model
8.4.2.1. Audit and Integration Phase (the inputs phase)

This should be the first phase in every interpretive plan where it can be called also the inputs phase where all various elements will be later processed to establish the Integrated Contexts Interpretive Plan (hereafter ICIP). Also, this phase can be seen as the establishment phase since its two main aims are to establish a Leadership and Partnership Board and ICIP. This phase includes four elements which are: a) Motivations and Initial Aims and Objectives; b) Audit and Analysis; c) Dynamic Integration Processes; and d) Leadership and Partnership Board.

a- Motivations and Initial Aims and Objectives

There are various incentives which work as leading catalysts or motivations for AH management to consider PIN planning\textsuperscript{263} for one or more archaeological site. To develop an interpretive plan there should be one or more specific incentives which can be internal-led and/or external-led. The internals come from inside the responsible stewardship itself, e.g. MOHC and OCA, and it can be related to structural and operational factors. For example, the desire to develop a master management plan for a World Heritage Site can be a motivation to design an interpretive plan for the site as well. One example for this is the attempt to develop interpretive programs for the ancient frankincense trade at al-Balid and Khor Rori (AM17, AS11). Also, in some cases the stewardship may decide to design interpretive programs to raise the public awareness and provide financial resources for sustaining particular archaeological sites due to their national or scientific significance.

\textsuperscript{263} Aldridge (1975: 11) defines interpretive planning as 'the complete process of answering the questions what, where, when and how in relation to interpretive provision. It begins with a series of survey and ends with a detailed prospectus for the interpretive provisions'.

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As for the external motivations, mostly, they come from other governmental institutions, such as MOT, or from private groups or individuals who would like to invest in AH for different reasons. For example, the development of Ras al-Jinz was essentially motivated by the Scientific Centre and Museum which will be totally funded by the Oman Liquefied National Gas, LNG (Ministry of Information 2006, AM26). Whether motivations are internal or external there must be initial directive aims and objectives\(^{264}\) that guide the next stage of this phase which is Audit and Analysis. These aims and objectives are basically established based on those particular motivations that had led an interpretive initiative to be proposed in the first place. The determination of these aims and objective is subject to modification resulting from audit stage during PIN planning and formulation, as well as from dynamic evaluation and monitoring processes.

The desired values might affect the interpretive provision to be oriented depends on the stakeholders, e.g. market-led, community-led, operational-led, official-led. Therefore, one aim for the next steps is to help in balancing the various rising perspectives and reshape the intended values. It is important to stress here that the motivations can determine various features and aspects of interpretive plans such as geographic boundaries and audience. In regard to the geographic elements for example, PIN can be designed at various levels, i.e. local, inter-local, regional, inter-regional, national or even international.

\(^{264}\) Merriman (2005: 37) mentioned that effective PIN 'built around measurable objectives is cost effective and recruits the user in protections of sensitive resources'.
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b- Audit and Analysis

The lack of the required data and knowledge is one of the reasons that stands against the implementation of integrative approach (Butler 1999). Therefore, the purpose of this stage is to audit and analyze the whole impact context (McLaughlin et al. 2006a) where both the Micro-impact and the Macro-impact of the three contexts within the selected geographic area are carefully and consistently examined. This explorative stage should audit PC of AH and its relation to the wider cultural landscape, the involved stewardship and stakeholders and SCC.

Very important here to consider the development of such a technique as Historical Landscape Characterization\textsuperscript{265} approach (HLC) which is a process of describing, analyzing and identifying patterns within the historic landscape to provide an insight into how people have influenced the landscape over time, reflecting its time-depth and highlighting the degree of continuity and change within it (Macinnes 2004). The audit phase is an inventory process which is important to identify and locate all considerable affective factors in PIN\textsuperscript{266}. Herein, all resources associated with, contiguous to or affected by PIN should coordinate and bring all involved aspects within the specified area together at the beginning of the planning process. This assures that all related contexts will be weighted equally in the interpretive integrated plan (Bradley 1982).

\textsuperscript{265} Instead of site-specific approaches of most archaeological records, in 1992 Historical Landscape Characterization (HLC) was developed in England as a strategy to characterize the dominant historical processes which have affected the landscape and which are still evident within it (Macinnes 2004: 156). Therefore, based on local knowledge and professional assessment, HLC identifies the dominant historic land use or characteristics and provides an understanding of the historic depth behind the characteristics.

\textsuperscript{266} According to Bradley (1982: 89), 'A good inventory provides basic data necessary for effective transmission of interpretive information, potential justification for acquiring additional land and opportunity for retaining the interpretive integrity of the area'.

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As inventory here is goal-oriented where it was made based on specific motivations, it must try as possible to follow those suggested initial aims and objectives in the first step of this phase. Regardless the selected techniques which are used to gained data, ‘accurate information requires well-targeted primary fieldwork and effective data management’ (Cadw and Royal Commission 1999: 4), especially for the data from the micro-context of AH.

A very important factor for the success of this step is the involvement of different specialists to ensure the validity and affectivity of the gathered data. Again and again, PIN includes many arts (Tilden 1977, Aldridge 1989) where a multidisciplinary profession and a teamwork planning are required. In order to assure this, the audit should not just focus on the physical tangible aspects of AH, but the intellectual intangible heritage is equally important for archaeological sites267 in the Omani context.

Accordingly, the audit involves the collection of all relevant information about the resources to be developed. It should include aspects such as the region’s ecology, history, demographic data, culture, economy resources, soundscapes and land use. Also, it includes the inventory and evaluation of the existing and potential of attractions, activities, accommodation, facilities and transportation268. Also, beside the resources,

267 The ICOMOS report ‘Filling the Gap’ in regard to the World Heritage List (ICOMOS 2005) emphasised the importance of the broad anthropological context over time in a holistic way, reflecting tangible as well as intangible qualities of the nominated properties, as the latter are becoming increasingly important.

268 Herein, Ritchie and Crouch’s (2003: 257-264) model of operational measures of destination competitiveness and sustainability, destination diagnostics, can be utilized during this stage (see Section 4.4.4).
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this phase should gather information about the involved stakeholders, including the locals, and the expected market.

After data collection, the responsible management should conduct data analysis which considers the ‘total system’ (Bradley 1982: 90), analyzing processes should be a holistic and integrative process. Gaps in this step may lead to a low quality plan. However, if this is the status where there is a lack of research about a particular interpretive unit; thus, Uzzell (1998b) suggested that the available information can be used with caution. Later, the appointed Leadership and Partnership Board should seek practical mechanisms to fill in these gaps by conducting systematic research as needed. For quality PIN, the audit and analysis processes need to be dynamic, updated and conducted periodically which is important for PIN nourishment (Tilden 1977)269. It should be understood that ‘interpretive planning is a process, not a product’ (Brochu 2003: xii).

c- Dynamic Integration Processes

This stage is about synthesizing the analyzed database or ‘the putting together of parts or elements so as to form a whole’ (Inskeep 1991: 141). The involved team needs to integrate all those data gathered from primary and secondary sources about AH, its wider cultural landscape and its cultural tourism landscape. The integrating stage provides much of the basis for the interpretive plan formulation and recommendations.

269 For instance, archaeological sites are part of the dynamic environmental system where ‘a site should be viewed dynamically, as the present state of a continuing process of landscape evolution rather than as an isolated and static phenomenon’ (Price 1996: 288).
Herein, the gained and analysed data about the Micro-impact and the Macro-impact of the three contexts need to be integrated and their interrelationships are understood\textsuperscript{270}.

The synergy processes are not an easy mission, therefore, to save time, money and effort the data need to be assembled and evaluated into interactive manageable systems such as Geographic Information System (GIS) applications. A greater understanding of archaeological sites in their various settings becomes easier by using aerial photographs and relevance field surveys\textsuperscript{271}. Also, the use of such technology will help in understanding the extent and character of land use in the area of archaeological sites as well as examining the influence of the cultural landscape on the sites and vice versa. This is especially important since the integration processes need to be dynamic for future needs. Also, in the next stages GIS-based data are more capable of producing various interpretive themes at local, regional or national level.

At this stage, and based on the findings, the opportunities, threats, strengths and weaknesses of the selected area can be described. Also, it is initially possible to suggest some potential interpretive themes or interpretive opportunities which may be centered around some significant features of the area or more general. However, the final plan altogether with the modified aims and objectives can not be decided until a Leadership and Partnership Board is established by the responsible supervisory team based on the gathered information.

\textsuperscript{270} Inskeep (1991: 27) emphasized that in order to achieve effective development patterns and not generate serious problems ‘all aspects of the area or development sector being planned must be understood and carefully integrated’.\textsuperscript{271} GIS and aerial images can make surveying, storing, analysing, interpreting, planning, managing and evaluating the obtained information much easier and effective especially that some archaeological sites are best viewed from the air (Gaffney \textit{et al.} 1995, van Leusen 1995).
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In addition to what is mentioned about thematic PIN in sections 3.8.1 and 8.3.1, it helps in managing and organizing the huge amount of gathered data from the three contexts and representative’s perspectives. Also, some scholars (e.g. Aldridge 1975, Ham 1992, Veverka 1994, Beck and Cable 2002a) suggest that thematic PIN can save time, money and effort for planners, interpreters and audience. Also, it leads to the avoidance of duplication of information and services and the achievement of proper planning and implementation\textsuperscript{272}.

\textit{d- Leadership and Partnership Board}

At this stage, all integrated data need to be presented to select representatives from the various involved stakeholders depends on the intended interpretive plan. The members of the \textit{Leadership and Partnership Board} are representatives chosen from all those who will be influenced by ICIP from the governmental sectors, private sectors, academic sector, local entrepreneurship, local communities and others. Its main aim is to facilitate a ‘consensus planning’\textsuperscript{273} (Nilsson 2007: 436) where several issues are managed to achieve consensus through communicative conversations between all stakeholders. The board has various dynamic responsibilities; some of these responsibilities are to:

\textsuperscript{272} Herein, the less appealing sites and historic landscapes would ‘greatly enhance the opportunities to introduce visitors to the fascinating evidence of the evolution of settlement and land use’ (Binks 1986: 43). Aldridge (1975: 26) emphasized these points in the regional or local interpretive plans by saying: ‘In the case of the regional plan, we are concerned with avoiding duplication, allocating local themes to local areas, and ensuring as fast as possible that the local themes taken together contribute to a regional story which represents a major part of the personality of the region. In the case of the local plan, we are seeking to interpret the significance of the local area through a theme which is often a highly selective presentation’.

\textsuperscript{273} It is a collaborative approach where many stakeholders are involved; it is structured to achieve the local and national planning objectives and sustainable development. It emphasizes the societal issues in planning, advocating public interest. It is communicative planning where there is a mutual conversation between all stakeholders and actors (Nilsson 2007).
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- Integrate interpretive mechanisms of AH into comprehensive plans or the wider tourism development plans and policies;
- Help in suggesting further research and incorporating the data gathered to establish ICIP for the selected AH and its cultural landscape;
- Review, revise, enhance and develop the initial suggested aims and objective in the light of new databases\(^{274}\);
- Allocate and divide jobs for the different partners;
- Help in recruiting and designing training programs in PIN;
- Develop a business plan and identify financial resources and investment opportunities;
- Discuss any rising issues and keep a balance among all stakeholders;
- Set the related directive policies of ICIP;
- Monitor and evaluate ICIP implementation and impact; and
- Comment and decide on feedback and adjustment proposals.

These responsibilities can be strengthened through the networking among the representatives at regular meetings. As needed, multidisciplinary workshops for the involved stakeholders and their representatives on the board need to be held frequently at various levels and phases. The main purposes of these workshops are myriad such as to:

- Explain the initial aims and objectives of the interpretive plan and seek the representatives’ insight;

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\(^{274}\) Brochu (2003) defined three main objectives for interpretive planning which are: management objectives, action objectives and interpretation objectives. These objectives can serve the short-term and long-term goals of a particular institution and they need to be measured regularly.
found a common ground and shared meanings amongst the stakeholders in order to build reciprocal confidence;

- describe the expected values and socio-economic outputs; and

- consult the various stakeholders through their representatives in any main sensitive issues that should be addressed carefully.

As the lack of understanding and information about the nature of tourism is one of the impediments facing the integrative approach (Butler 1999), these workshops are vital to keep the members of the stakeholders informed and updated, especially that many of the board members are expected not to have previous experience in archaeotourism or PIN values. A group facilitation might be needed where a neutral facilitator is selected to ‘help a group improve how it identifies and solves problems and makes decisions, to increase the group effectiveness’ (Schwarz 2002: 5). An important element in regard to the board is that the selected representatives should be mindful and contemplative as possible and aware of their multi-responsibilities.

Similar to the System Approach to PIN, Capelle et al. (1989: 118) insisted that to implement this approach there is a need for managers who ‘can appreciate the benefits of planning interpretive services on a regional scale, not the traditional site-only bases’.

Besides, as suggested by Ritchie and Crouch (2003: 22) the wise stewardship of resources is critical to the long-term competitiveness of a tourism destination. Another important meaning for being a mindful representative is the ability to negotiate different solutions to construct ICIP based on collective reality or shared intentionality (Searle

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275 In fact, ‘a lack of knowledge about the potential for cooperation and the benefit of the cultural tourism seem to be the biggest barriers to development’ (Richards and Hall 2000:13).
1995) to avoid cross-cultural conflict which may arise from the different interests and expected benefits from ICIP. That is to say, what is important here is that partnership should take the form of ‘strategic alliances’ (Sautter and Leisen 1999: 326) where every stakeholder work according to the collective suggested strategy.

8.4.2.2. Planning and Themeing

For its importance, designing ICIP is considered to be the only focal aim for this phase in particular. It represents a master interpretive plan and a reference to create an Integrated Interpretive Network for the next phase. It is a directive guide for implementing, managing and operating, marketing, monitoring, sustaining and improving PIN. In short, it is the essence of ICPI and a descriptive document and translation for the collective works that have been done in the first phase of the model, i.e. motivations, aims and objectives, audit, analysis and integration process, partnership board, discussions, etc.

The Leadership and Partnership Board is required to agree upon a particular strategy with a mission for the project in question. As a strategy, it needs to be clear in order to achieve quality management objectives, to focus attention on priorities, to coordinate action between stakeholders and to act as a persuasive tool in seeking support and funding (European Commission 2000a: 26).

ICIP should have a major directive guide of aims and measurable objectives. This represents the key to success for interpretive plans and reflects the mission of the management board (Veverka 1994, Brochu 2003). Therefore, the aims and objectives
need to be identified and balanced; they clarify the role and importance of ICIP\textsuperscript{276}. They might be different from the initial aims and objectives suggested in the first phase. Herein, they provide the direction and content of all interpretive activities and programs which, as possible, need to be connected to emotional, behavioural and learning expected outputs (Veverka 1994). Also, they need to achieve livability, efficiency, amenity, flexible and choice, minimum harm to natural and cultural communities or sustainability, optimum use of resources and public participation and empowerment (Bradley 1982)\textsuperscript{277}. An important aspect is that ICIP should conform to the structure and operational policy and regulations of the leading governmental stewardship. In line with this, a set of policy should be established; however, in compatible with the national legislation as well as with the international agreements and directives. This is in order to reserve the rights of all involved stakeholders and actors, including the host community. ICPI fosters the sense of shared ownership amongst all stakeholders where ICIP must be based on a collective agreement in order to determine the most effective way to communicate AH in integrative ways and provide quality interpretive experience for visitors\textsuperscript{278}. Therefore, ICIP needs to have a strategic view of where the site should be and what it should offer according to the suggested main aims and objectives. Accordingly, full description is required for the cultural tourism landscape and how AH, in particular, can be integrated within this landscape. ICIP should define all possible themes, sub-themes and storylines which must be unique to each part of the selected

\textsuperscript{276} In this regard, Feilden and Jokilehto (1993: 100) mentioned that ‘The aim of the interpretation of the heritage site needs to be clearly established before work starts, and reviewed regularly in the light of experience and changing thinking’.

\textsuperscript{277} Also, Oliver and Jenkins (2005) referred to the consideration of such characteristics as embeddedness and complementarity.

\textsuperscript{278} For instance, Knudson et al. (2003: 310) mentioned that ‘The plan identifies significant resources characteristics and features. It suggests how to relate them to the visitor, based on their characteristics, needs and desires’.
area and suggest the kind of interpretive infrastructure and services to be developed, design-based or people-based. Yet, it is expected that the selection of a particular interpretive strategy and media can be difficult. Thus, this needs to be done systematically based on the previous outcomes and guided by the available previous studies and practices. Also, the next phase (Section 8.4.2.3) will provide more insight on this aspect, e.g. specific location, model, design, etc.

Probably, during the planning stage more audit and analysis processes would be required to be carried out according to new data and perspectives provided by the representatives and by the evaluation process. This is part of the dynamic nature of ICPI approach as to avoid dissonant interpretation or conflicts in the implementation phase as much as possible and to ensure the sustainability and quality of PIN as well.

Also, one of the main aims for ICPI is to prevent ICIP from being manipulative interpretation which serves a limited group of people for oriented agenda. In ICPI, any stakeholder can express its perspective freely and have the right to suggest or reject any proposed Integrated Interpretive Theme or interpretive technique. In regard to the locals, ICPI provides the opportunity for them to express their wishes to interpret their local sites which might interconnect with other suggested Integrated Interpretive Themes. Yet, this should be accompanied with valid justifiable evidence and in the light of the final decided aims and objectives of ICIP. Every theme should be determined and implemented through overriding agreed-upon purposes. The early mentioned networking workshops and regular meetings can play a major role in

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279 Philips and Tubridy (1994: 117) included that one of the benefits for a master interpretive plan is ‘to ensure that the right level of resources is allocated to interpretation projects which meet the needs of visitors, and reflect the interest of local communities’.
producing joint themes and create smaller joint partnership under the umbrella of the board to insure that this is happening and progressing according to a collective directive strategy.

Any Integrated Interpretive Theme needs to be well-studied and based on scientific research than being arbitrary and more research might be needed for some suggested interpretive units, an interpretive element used to communicate the proposed theme such as an archaeological site and a falaj, a handicraft shop, a local museum. According to ICPI, the priority is given to those themes which are capable of establishing interpretive units that can be utilized for various integrated themes within the Integrated Interpretive Network. The proposed themes should have a potential to represent the historic dimension of a particular landscape more fully and connect AH to other heritage components within the cultural landscape and the cultural tourism landscape as much as possible. It could also provide an understanding behind the present characteristics of the interpreted landscapes. As for the interpretive units, their selection depends on such factors as scale, preservation, authenticity, uniqueness and accessibility. Priorities should be given for those units that serve the area as a whole and show the unique regional personality from prehistoric time, if possible, to the present day. Sites and sights are selected according to their interpretive potential and their capability to provide complementary panoramic views that enable visitors to get a good holistic interpretive experience about the area. All these aspects should be planned in congruent with the phase one, Audit and Integration.
A site can be selected to work as a hub or part of a cluster of sites. The hub can work as a gate to various clusters of sites where information, orientation and various alternative interpretations can be provided. Similar to the information points suggested for the Herian interpretive project in south Wales, these hubs can be used to entice people from established popular attractions to equally interesting, but less well-known sites and scenic countryside (PLB Projects Ltd and Govannan Consultancy 2003).

Furthermore, a major aim of ICIP is to provide a guide of recommendations in regard to aspects such as promotion and marketing, visitor management, training programs and investment opportunities. Finally, it is important to make ICIP accessible manually or electronically for all involved stakeholders as needed, but with caution.

8.4.2.3. The Implementation, Marketing and Management Phase (the processing phase)

The main principle of this phase is to design and construct a viable holistic Integrated Interpretive Network based on the suggested interpretive themes. ICIP here is practically translated into a group of interconnected themes. Again, every Integrated Interpretive Theme should be done in congruent with ICIP main aims and objectives without compromising the micro-context and macro-context of the resources.

Also, this phase is responsible for the establishment of a Managerial and Marketing Strategy for the entire Integrated Interpretive Network. Both the network and the strategy need to be integrated internally and externally. Internally means that both strategies need to complement each other within the micro-context of a particular interpreted unit. Externally refers to the incorporation of the strategies within the macro-
dimension of the interpreted unit. Additionally, a major part of both the *Integrated Interpretive Theme* and the *Managerial and Marketing Strategy* is the third components of this phase which is the *Integrated Interpretive Media*. For their importance, the following lines will briefly describe the *Integrated Interpretive Network*, the *Managerial and Marketing Strategy* and the *Integrated Interpretive Media* and their role in ICPI.

**a. Integrated Interpretive Network**

The network is an implementation strategy for ICIP. It is composed of one or more integrated themes suggested by the *Leadership and Partnership Board*. The network is an integrative interpretive strategy to foster an interconnection and interdependent relationship among the various interpretive units of the *Integrated Interpretive Themes*. A multi-disciplinary interpretive team from a wider range of professions and disciplines is created in cooperation with the board. Accordingly, besides the professions, the team should include representatives from the involved stakeholders, including the locals.

The interpretive network can be made out of one or more themes depending on various factors such as first motivations, size and potential of the archaeological site and its cultural landscape, the board representatives, financial and human resources, the market and the alike. An integrated theme might incorporate one or more sub-themes which in return are made of smaller interpretive units (Figure 8.7).²⁸⁰

²⁸⁰ For example, ICIP may suggest the designing of a theme relative to Magan culture. Here, a possible theme can be focused around 'Oman, the land of copper'. Under this theme, some sub-themes can be created about 'ancient mining sites' or reconstructed 'copper caravan trails'. Here, every ancient mining or smelting site represents an interpretive unit within the main theme which in return is part of the wider *Integrated Interpretive Network*. The *Leadership and Partnership Board* may suggest another theme that can be conflated with this theme such as the 'old oasis of Oman'.

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One technique to facilitate the design and construction of a particular Integrated Interpretive Theme for the development of archaeotourism in particular, is the thematic integration of different heritage resources based on chronological dimension and spatial dimensions. This technique can be called the Thematic Chronological-Spatial Interpretation where several interpretive units are integrated according to appropriate theme/s to provide a complementary PIN plan from the audited resources based on a particular main idea\textsuperscript{281} (Table 8.1).

\textsuperscript{281} Here, the use of GIS image has the potential to facilitate the use of Thematic Chronological-Spatial Interpretation in planning a coherent theme by making it easier to explore the possibilities and connects archaeological sites with other heritage resources in local, regional and even national levels. This is important for a multi-themes interpretive plan within a particular interpretive network.
Table 8.1: An example for the *Thematic Chronological-Spatial Interpretation* where the Chronological Dimension refers to various historic periods for the selected interpretive units within a particular cultural landscape, the Spatial Dimension.

The interpretive units could date from various historical periods within a selected geographic area and this reflects the chronological dimension for the technique. As for the spatial dimension it refers to the geographic context in which the chronological dimension is located. The *Thematic Chronological-Spatial Interpretation* technique is more than an inventory strategy as it allows interpretive units to be classified and organized on chronological and spatial dimensions to help in creating a thematic PIN by the interpretive team and link the past to the present.

Geographically, the technique can be used at local, inter-local, regional, interregional, national and international level which depends on the aims and objectives of the suggested theme. Some of the main aims for this technique are to:
facilitate the selection of appropriate themes based on the historic characterization with the selected area;

➤ link and facilitate the connection of AH with other heritage resources in chronological and sensible context;

➤ provide some alternatives for visitors and create some diversity and enrichment by including various heritage components, i.e. built, natural and living;

➤ communicate and enhance mindful interpretive visitors’ experience and make sense out of AH;

➤ empower the role and function of AH in the public life and communicate its various values to the local communities through the development of community archaeology and community PIN;

➤ link remote or peripheral sites to those located in core areas as well as to enliven the less visited sites and other heritage resources;

➤ prevent duplication and save time, money and effort; and

➤ pinpoint the gaps in the chronology of a particular selected areas which might suggest a further field research.

One site can be a cross-interpretive unit for different themes within a particular area. Also, while one site can be an intrinsic or core attraction for some visitors, for others it is an optional, incidental or accidental282. Accordingly, except maybe for the captive visitors, such as school parties, visitors are not obligated to visit the interpretive units in chronological order. They are free to create or to do what Jafari (2001: 3) called

282 In this context, McKercher and du Cros (2002: 110) mentioned that a heritage attraction ‘could act as a primary, secondary and tertiary attractions simultaneously, depending on the tourists’ different reasons for visiting’
‘touristic sampling’ for the visited place where they can customize their own themes (interpretive package) and select any interpretive unit located within the interpreted context. This support for flexibility comes from such facts as type of tourists, time, money, appeal, accessibility and uniqueness.

Also, the Integrated Interpretive Network can organize the site according to the concept of ‘hub and clusters’ which means to unify a group of heritage sites in ‘clusters’ around a series of major sites called ‘hubs’ (LPB Projects Ltd and Govannan Consultancy 2003). Here, a hub can act as a major interpretive unit that is a destination in its own right or a flagship for other integrated units, e.g. Bahla Oasis. However, what important here is that any interpretive unit within a particular Integrated Interpretive Theme needs to be connected thematically to its main ideas. Similar to the ‘dispersed interpretation’ (Stewart et al. 2001: 350), ICPI is ‘working from the specific to the general and guiding awareness and understanding through familiar channels to less familiar subjects’. This means that visitors are encouraged to visit and learn about other attractions within the wider cultural landscape by building upon their particular primary interests in visiting a given attraction (the core) and relate this to the wider cultural landscape or the clusters, including archaeological sites.

b- Managerial and Marketing Strategy

When a particular Integrated Interpretive Theme is finalized, the interpretive team, in cooperation with the Leadership and Partnership Board, needs to design, construct and prepare interpretive infrastructure and services. Thus, the main purpose of an integrated

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283 For instance, Ham (1992) mentioned that the probability that a non-captive audience will pay attention depends on the potential benefit and the required effort to get the benefit.
managerial and marketing strategy is to ensure and facilitate the implementation of the
designed Integrated Interpretive Themes in harmony and efficient way\textsuperscript{284}. The
Managerial and Marketing Strategy manages the construction and administration of the
established interpretive network and promotes ready-constructed interpretive services
(i.e. self-guided trails, local museums, demonstration) to the desired audience or market.

With the support of the board, the Managerial and Marketing Strategy is required to
manage the ‘operational resources’ (Brochu 2003: 76) which includes the provision of
any required staff, facilities, maintenance and finance. This is important in order to
avoid senseless PIN or negative quality interpretive experience for visitors. For
example, in regard to visitor management, there should be two considerations; the
particular genius loci of the place are wholly respected and the excellence is achieved in
the quality of the experience for visitors (Millar 1999).

There is no doubt that the quality and success of the Integrated Interpretive Network
will partially depend on the managerial board and their efficiency, mindfulness and
appreciation of the collective partnership in managing and monitoring the provided
interpretive services and infrastructure. A ‘mindful management’ (Moscardo 1997: 16)
that it recognizes its responsibilities and roles in integration processes is critically
important. The Managerial and Marketing Strategy should go side by side with ICIP’s
aims and objectives. Additionally, the management needs to be aware of the role of PIN
as a hard and soft management tool. For example, site managers may consider applying
various visitor management tools (e.g. alternative themes, direction maps, guided trails,

\textsuperscript{284} In this matter, Shackley (2006) stressed that a holistic visitor management plan needs to be fully
addressed when developing the management plan.
virtual tour, moving facilities) to network interpretive themes and at the same time achieve a sustainable PIN.

Beside management, and as PIN operates in a business context, the Managerial and Marketing Strategy is responsible for promoting and marketing the Integrated Interpretive Themes. The Managerial and Marketing Strategy should care for visitors pre-visit, during visit and post-visit. To do so, the involved team has to learn to become professionals and to compete in the current market by intersecting with ‘the economic sphere’ (Little 2004: 279). To reach to such level successfully, it is important to develop training programs constantly. Marketing plans should serve different functions such as providing market analysis and recommendations (Brochu 2003)\(^{285}\) and prepare off-site interpretive media. The off-site media could enhance visitors’ experience before their actual visit (Prentice 1993)\(^{286}\), prepare visitors for visiting, provide them with alternatives and relate to the visitors which could assist in achieving mindfulness state (Moscardo 1998)\(^{287}\). Parkin et al. (1989) pointed out that PIN starts from capturing the potential visitor first time through visual image on leaflets and in the media.

Accordingly, it is important to relate the Integrated Interpretive Network to market segments where the Leadership and Partnership Board should think carefully and realistically about the kinds of visitor that stewardship is able and wish to attract. Stewardship should consider how different market segments relate to the interpretive

\(^{285}\) McLaughlin et al. (2006a: 12) suggested the use of visitors profile as one way to enable more targeted marketing strategies to take place.

\(^{286}\) In this regard, Urry (2002: 3) mentioned that the off-site interpretation ‘may motivate to choose a place to be gazed upon because there is anticipation...constructed and sustained through a variety of non-tourist practices’.

\(^{287}\) Buhalís et al. (2006) highlight the significance of technology or e-marketing in the pre-visit and post-visit experience where the published information in the internet websites, for example, allows visitors to plan in advance, develop their knowledge, and generate repeat visits.
strategy and objectives to avoid any sort of conflict and achieve a sustainable archaeotourism. Therefore, Prentice (2004) emphasized that marketing strategy needs to be based in the understanding of consumer reality where visitors are remarkably diverse and a standard interpretive message or medium cannot work with all visitors. This is an important issue for the tourism industry in Oman as the government intends to promote and support selective niche markets and special types of tourism rather than mass tourism (Ministry of Commerce and Industry 2001, Sweeney 2002).

One application for the concept of ‘whole person’ is that the previous personal experience of audience does matter (Bradley 1982, Pine and Gilmore 1998)\(^{288}\) which emphasizes the importance of considering the whole audience which means ‘a group of people who would require the interpreters to be familiar with the tastes, interests, preferences of their audience’ (Sam Ham: personal communication: 22/May/2008). Herein, choices concerning interpretive representation help in shaping ways in which the tourist understand heritage sites (Macleod 2006). The Managerial and Marketing Strategy should be dynamic and built on practical sense rather than static standards and imaginative ideas. As this is one of the most complicated processes in PIN (Buhalis et al. 2006), ICPI emphasizes the necessity of team-based work in PIN.

Another important aspect in the Managerial and Marketing Strategy is that it should go side by side with the practical implementation of a particular interpretive theme where ‘a total marketing approach requires that promises kept, even excelled’ (Sweeney 2002:

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\(^{288}\) For instance, Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996: 28) argue that interpretation is ideological in sense that the conveyed messages through heritage products can be received by consumers quite different from that intended.
6). As marketing is part of the tourism chain and visitor’s interpretive experience, this step should be based on realistic products rather than presenting fake images.

**c- Integrated Interpretive Media**

According to their types, the media can be designed for off-site or on-site interpretive purposes, either personal (people-based) or impersonal (design-based). The main aim of the *Integrated Interpretive Media* is to transform the overall ICIP’s aims and objectives to audience and to convey and reinforce all or part of the focal message of a particular theme within the constructed interpretive network. In the wider sense, it is arguable that any interpretive unit can be described as a medium in ICPI even if it is unaided with design-based technology or attended. For instance, an ancient copper mining trail is an interpretive medium that might connect other sub-media or interpretive sub-units, such as a mine shaft and smelting furnace, so visitors can understand the relationship among all integrated sites. So the concept of media here can be as small as a thematic map or an ethnographic or archaeological object and as big as the whole interpretive network.

The *Integrated Interpretive Media* should assist in making sense of the selected themes and their interpretive units properly and efficiently. To do this, the *Integrated Interpretive Media* should complement one another and not to be duplicated. ICPI underlines the importance of using various interactive media that provoke and interact with all senses in intellectual, emotional and physical ways without harming the interpreted sites. By providing various media to transform a particular theme, visitors are not forced to encounter one way of thinking; however, they can select according to their level of experience, time, interest...etc. The *Integrated Interpretive Media* should
be designed to reach the audience from various aspects and consider all those factors that might help in enhancing the total interpretive experience. The Integrated Interpretive Media is a tool to mediate not only the desired message by managers, but it allows visitors to have their own interpretations.

As part of ICPI, the Integrated Interpretive Media is an integrative strategy which connects and introduces visitors to other related sites within the Integrated Interpretive Network. It works as a gate which leads visitors to explore more elements and enrich their interpretive experience. In line with this, and in order to convey and reinforce one or more messages to visitors efficiently, the employment of Omani interpreters as a personal media or in designing the Integrated Interpretive Media is preferred as this is confirmed by the research findings (see chapters six and nine). Similarly, the use of environmental Omani materials in designing a trail or designing a sun shelter out of the palm-trees products might be more convincing and effective in generating sense of the visited place. This explains the criticism for the current methods used in reconstructing and restoring the historical monuments at Bahla and al-Balid as confirmed in Chapter Five. Also, doing so can have multiplied effects where the local handicrafts, for instance, can be revived and consequently local socio-economic benefits can accrue.

Having said this, the evaluation of the Integrated Interpretive Media influence should not be limited to visitors, but to the micro-impact of the interpreted context (see Section 8.4.2.4). Therefore, as the visitor profile influences the media designing, similarly, factors, such as sites integrity and local reservations, part of the whole context, should not be negotiated. Again, the use of media should consider the unique context of each
interpretive unit where ‘what has worked on one heritage site may not be effective for all’ (Feilden and Jokilehto 1993: 100). Beside this, there is a need for an effective technology management where a continuous review of technology strategy is required (Mcloughlin et al. 2006b). Finally, despite its importance, it should be stressed that in ICPI media are not indicative of PIN, but common means by which PIN messages may be delivered (Prentice 1996).

8.4.2.4. The Total Impact Phase (the outputs phase)

This phase is considered to be the outputs phase for the previous phases, inputs and processing, which are expected to foster impacts on the audience and the interpreted context. As an integrative approach, ICPI relates to the network of heterogeneous organizations ‘to cater effectively and efficiently to visitors’ needs and expectations, and to minimize the potential negative socio-cultural, economic and ecological on the environment of a host community’ (Go and Govers 2000: 80).

Also, as ICPI is not merely a market-led or audience-led approach, it goes beyond the commercialization of PIN and AH to observe the total impact in the various resources within the whole context and the involved stakeholders. Therefore, the success and efficiency of ICIP depends on its role in preserving AH, raising the public awareness of AH values, activating the local community participation in interpretation and the alike. However, it is expected that this role might be influenced by different factors as neither the audience, nor the PC, SSC and SCC of a particular site are static. A brief description is given below for the importance of this phase in relation to the audience’s Total Interpretive Experience and the interpreted micro context.
Chapter Eight: Toward An Integrative Approach to Public Interpretation

a. Total Interpretive Experience

Since any interpretive plan is mainly designed for audience, it is not surprising to find that most published literature in PIN is mostly focused on audience experience where ‘all things are audience dependent’ (Sam Ham: personal communication: 22/May/2008). In fact, almost any suggested definition for PIN includes the audience as a focal element (see Section 3.2.3). Thematic interpretation (Ham 1992), the big concept (Copeland 2006) and market-led planning (Brochu 2003) are examples that show how audience are focal in planning PIN.

As for ICPI, the ‘whole person’ certainly represents one of the main aspects in any Integrated Interpretive Theme. This is based on the fact that ICPI is not a manipulative approach in a sense that visitors are given different alternatives and have the opportunity to create their own experience depending on their interests. From a theoretical perspective, they become interpretive audience which is not an optional, but a mandatory from constructionist and constructivist points of view whether interpreters and archaeologists like it or not (see sections 3.6.3 and 4.3.3). A constructivist perspective is valuable in ICPI approach because it believes in visitors’ right to interpret and it considers their perspectives; herein, experts’ perspectives can be negotiated.

Similar to the ‘thesis-based interpretation’ discussed by Lundberg (1997), the Integrated Interpretive Theme should provoke, challenge, disturb and unsettle audience; it should move them from their comfort zone. This is one of the keys for quality PIN which arranges for self-interpretation where the interpreter provides materials to visitors to learn on their own and become ‘cultural producers’ (Tilley 1989: 280). As a service, the
Managerial and Marketing Strategy must ensure that interpretive programs are relevant to visitor's needs (Hall and McArthu 1998) and provide a memorable experience (Pine and Gilmore 1998). This can be encouraged by a self-reflection activity (Crang 1996), sense-on experiences and site visits to archaeological sites as this might be more capable to convey insightful learning experience at a particular site (Prentice 1996) (see Section 3.7).

The desired visitor profile, as decided by the Leadership and Partnership Board, should be practically translated and expressed in the designed integrated themes. For instance, as a constructivist approach, ICPI admits that the general public is 'made up of different audiences with different needs and different expectations' (Uzzell 1998b: 249). To explain, SCC shows that the educational system and illiteracy represent two of the main factors to be considered when designing interpretive programs for the local visitors. Therefore, as discussed in the Managerial and Marketing Strategy the appointed PIN team should consider the types of tourists who are visiting, e.g. demographic and psychographic characteristics. For instance, it is important that PIN considers those tourists who want to have in-depth experiences and those incidentals who look for a short experience. Also, meanwhile some visitors may prefer design-based media, there are those who are more interested in people-based PIN and vice versa. Herein, interactive technology is one way that can be adapted to allow visitors to choose freely the media they can best relate to (Laws 2001).

From the discussion in Chapter Three and in this chapter, there are three main sources that PIN for AH participates in constructing the Total Interpretive Experience which
are: pre-visit experience; during-visit experience; and post-visit experience (Figure 8.8). The Total Interpretive Experience is the product of a continuous active dynamic ‘external-internal shift’ (Beck and Cable 2002a: 14) which means the explanation of external message through internal previous experience and constructed values as well. These externalization and internalization processes may start before visiting the site and continue after the visit via off-site interpretive media\(^{289}\).

Based on this, PIN should not be seen as an end product, but as a process where dynamism of constructing a new experience is opened and admitted (Grimwade and Carter 2000). As construction processes can be endless, therefore, it is arguable that there is no final static interpretive experience; rather, it is a dynamic where multiple interpretations ‘are created, recreated and contested as social process’ (Knudson et al 2007: 229).

\(^{289}\)Therefore, Aldridge (1989: 85) suggested that interpretation should aim to make the appreciation of a place relevant to audience and conflate the appreciation into their lives.
Chapter Eight: Toward An Integrative Approach to Public Interpretation

Figure 8.8: The Total Interpretive Experience different processes

Figure 8.8 suggests that learning can not be created through a simple accretion of facts; instead, ‘the streams of information is selected, interpreted and organized to form the cognitive structures, schemas’ (Lee 2002: 205) about a particular context. It is suggested here that before learning takes place, there is a liminal zone or transitional stage which can be called the filtering processes where all coming messages get sieved against the constructed experience and values before finally accommodated, assimilated or even rejected by ‘the cognitive map’ (Prentice 1996: 58)\(^\text{290}\) of visitors.

To explain more, when a visitor gazes at an archaeological object, reading it or trying to understand a site, s/he will go through internal search and think of it in a holistic way by connecting what s/he is looking at to the constructed values and stored previous

\(^{290}\) Cognitivism is ‘a psychological perspective which takes perception as the core process in the way in which an individual relates to the world he constructs through experience’ (Prince 1982: 165).
schemas or knowledge before any assimilation or accommodation of new ideas through the internalization and externalization processes.

Visitors may modify their perceptions about a destination after sharing their *Total Interpretive Experiences* with others (e.g. school students and their teachers and families) or updating their constructed experiences through the mass media. In this term, the *Total Interpretive Experience* for visitors is the total of all those construction and deconstruction processes, pre-visit, during-visit and post-visit. However, what is important for the *Leadership and Partnership Board* is to evaluate the *Total Interpretive Experience* which has been constructed from visitors’ pre-visit, while visit, and post-visit shortly after they finish their tour. This can be done through on-site and/or off-site evaluative techniques which their description and discussion are far from the subject of this chapter.

As ICPI is not manipulated by particular individuals or groups, and due to its dynamic nature, audience (e.g. visitors, the locals) should be allowed to participate in adjustment processes, share their perspectives and offer advices to the board. However, this should congruent with the *Micro-impact* and the *Macro-impact* of the three contexts within the interpreted landscape\(^{291}\). Welcoming the audience comments could have a vital role in reshaping ICIP and accordingly enhancing the *Total Interpretive Experience* for visitors and excelling their future expectations\(^{292}\).

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\(^{291}\) ICPI derived this nature from the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism (World Tourism Organization 1999: Article 8) which emphasizes the visitors’ right in accessibility to the cultural sites and should benefit from the same rights as the citizens of the country.

\(^{292}\) Beck and Cable (2002b) concluded that being aware of visitor’s perspective, knowledge and a past experience is essential for a successful interpretation.
Chapter Eight: Toward An Integrative Approach to Public Interpretation

b. The Micro-Impact of PIN

According to ICPI, PIN can not be considered successful by just providing a constructive *Total Interpretive Experience* to audience; however, there is another important measurement for the success of PIN which is its micro-impact on PC, SSC and SCC at a particular interpreted context. Certainly, it is expected that the positive impacts by applying ICPI strategy in the micro-context would have a gradual positive influence on the macro-context as well as these two contexts are interconnected based on the research findings.

As it is the case with audience, it is expected that through ICPI practices some of the mentioned factors relative to the three contexts will be cautiously and effectively addressed and managed (see Chapter Nine). For example, as sustainability is one of the main tenets of ICPI, it is expected that a particular *Integrated Interpretive Theme* assists in decreasing the natural and human negative impacts discussed in Chapter Five, especially if local communities are intellectually and physically involved in different ways (Figure 8.9). Thus, multiplied effects can occur to all involved stakeholders and interpreted resources because the multi-values for sustainability make it necessarily a shared reality among all stakeholders and a measurement for the influence and success of ICIP on the micro-context of the interpreted unit/s (see Chapter Nine). Therefore, sustainability should be regularly monitored through holistic integrated evaluative processes as the next section confirmed this.
8.4.2.5 *The Dynamic Integrated Evaluation and Monitoring*

Prentice (1993) emphasized the need in heritage tourism for the evaluation of heritage PIN to be placed as a priority rather than depending on intuition and experience. In ICPI, a *Dynamic Integrated Evaluation and Monitoring* is needed which starts from the first phase rather than being a final evaluative process for specific stated objectives. For instance, the initial objectives, suggested in the first phase, should be measured and evaluated by the *Leadership and Partnership Board* who in return evaluates and adjusts the initial objectives and the proposed interpretive plan as early described in Phase One and Phase Two.

The *Dynamic Integrated Evaluation and Monitoring* is a holistic continuous multi-disciplinary strategy of monitoring and investigation which collects data from the four mentioned phases and examines the likely effects of the established *Integrated Interpretive Network* on the audience and on interpretive units and their PC, SSC, SCC.
The success of the stated objectives for a specific integrated theme need to be measured in relation to the wider stated objectives for ICIP based on a particular systematic evaluative mechanism. Also, some information might be gathered through a periodic research strategy as the need arises. This type of evaluation and monitoring processes is similar to what Ritchie and Crouch (2003) called the *inward flow of information and research*. Herein, evaluation can be off-site or on-site and done by fieldwork or desk-based assessment.

*The Dynamic Integrated Evaluation and Monitoring* is also holistic and integrative in a sense that it looks at ICIP as a system made of complementary and interdependent processes. The shortcoming in one of these processes might affect the entire system. As ICIP resembles a vital ingredient in different tourism chains, and it is interconnected with the total travelling experience, a senseless PIN or shortcomings in one or more parts of the selected interpretive system can negatively influence the *Total Interpretive Experience* and the interpreted context, especially that both the *Micro-impact* and the *Macro-impact* of the three contexts are not static. Therefore, besides the evaluation of these two aspects, the entire implementation and processes in the four phases should be constantly monitored and adjusted. *The Dynamic Integrated Evaluation and Monitoring* should monitor the performance of a particular *Integrated Interpretive Theme* (including interpretive units and media), measure staff and visitor satisfaction, the incremental impacts of the interpretive network on local communities and their environment, quality management, promoting standards and training programs.\(^{293}\) Also, if possible, *The*

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\(^{293}\) For instance, in regard to tour guidance Weiler and Ham (2002: 63) wrote: 'Training efforts must be systematically evaluated, and lessons learned from these evaluations must be documented and disseminated widely and used to inform future training efforts'.
Dynamic Integrated Evaluation and Monitoring could include the search for evaluative techniques for the post-visit experience of visitors which might help in measuring the impact of a particular interpretive program in visitors' life.

Part of the Dynamic Integrated Evaluation and Monitoring's principles is to balance and compare all evaluative feedbacks by testing them against one another. This is to avoid jumping into a quick prejudicial final decision which might cost money, effort and time and benefit one side of the interpretive system at the account of others. One main reason for doing this is that a complete objective feedback from visitors is difficult to be expected and measured. Thus, the feedback obtained from visitors should be measured against those gained from the locals as well and vice versa.

All feedbacks from the inward flow are continuously gathered, analyzed and tested by the Managerial and Marketing Strategy team to be reported to the Leadership and Partnership Board with Adjustments Proposals and improvements. Adjustments may include training programs, visitor management techniques, advice on sources of funding, a new partnership and enterprises, etc. The board then re-evaluate the feedbacks and the proposals against ICIP aims and objectives. The board should seriously study various precautious alternatives to determine the expected advantages and disadvantages for each one of them. Various changes can be applied to any part of the Integrated Interpretive Network and further research might be needed before putting a final decision into work. Also, the board may decide to carry on systematic and problem-oriented evaluative programs to explore particular issues or to improve the network by adding or removing interpretive themes.
As ICIP is part of wider tourism plans, the final outcomes of the evaluation and adjustment proposals should be disseminated to all involved stakeholders through various media (e.g. periodic newsletters, official website). Because of its importance for such groups as the local community, tour operators and special interest tourists, this dissemination or *outward flow of information and research* (Ritchie and Crouch 2003) should also be monitored and improved by the board.

Finally, it should be mentioned that although the *Dynamic Integrated Evaluation and Monitoring* seems to be a complicated and difficult long-term processes, yet like any other evaluative programs, it is essential to meet the increasing challenges of accountability for AH stewardship and sustainable archaeotourism. Therefore, the *Dynamic Integrated Evaluation and Monitoring* is an effective strategy in ICPI that helps findings the gaps, enhancing the communication, sustaining AH and its environmental setting more properly; usually there is always a room for enhancement.

8.5. SUMMARY

The main aim of this chapter was to propose a holistic integrative strategy for PIN of AH in Oman guided by the research findings and the limited available literature. The suggested approach is an attempt to fill a gap in PIN literature, especially in relation to AH in developing countries.

The chapter underscores the importance of designing alternative approaches for communicating AH values in Oman as the current interpretive practices have been repeatedly criticized. Although some scholars and practitioners have developed some
integrative approaches to holistic PIN, yet, these approaches cannot be successfully applied to the Omani context where the micro-contexts and the macro-contexts of AH are slightly different. Beside, these approaches are unclear about how the whole context and the whole person are addressed while planning, implementing, managing, marketing and evaluating PIN. A well-planned integrative PIN for AH within the wider heritage-tourism industry is required to strengthen the integrative mechanism, communicate a total experience, sustain different types of heritage resources, deliver various benefits for stakeholders (including the locals), raise the public awareness of AH tangible and intangible values and foster a national pride and identity.

The proposed approach, ICPI, highlights the importance of improving the current interpretive approaches from being generic to become more specific and oriented to work for a particular context, a particular heritage and particular audience, from generalization to particularization. Thus, PIN team should not base any interpretive plan or services on fixed approaches and previous constructed knowledge, but the team ought to configure their planning approaches according to the context in which PIN will be suited, i.e. the specific selected heritage resources and required audience. The idea of ICPI should encourage a holistic conceptualization of PIN for AH which in return suggests a research methodology that seeks to engage all actors involved in its constitution.

In the light of the research findings, ICPI has emphasized the serious considerations of all factors within the three contexts at their micro and macro dimensions where such aspects as long-term vision, comprehensive plans and policies, authenticity, public
education and participation and dynamic evaluation are highly considered. That is to say, any archaeological landscape or attraction should be interpreted in relation to its cultural landscape and cultural tourism landscape. Also, this chapter illustrated the complicated nature of planning, implementing, managing and evaluating integrative holistic strategies for PIN by using ICPI which needs a factual dynamic cooperative partnership and an interdependent multi-roles system to achieve their multiple objectives.

It appears from the research findings that such integrative approaches as ICPI goes well with the present and future ambitious plans of the Omani government to develop the heritage-tourism in general, and special interest tourism in particular, including archaeotourism. Therefore, the next chapter will delineate in details some of the main trends of ICPI and their significance for the development of PIN in Oman, specifically in regard to archaeotourism.
CHAPTER NINE
ICPI APPROACH, ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE AND ARCHAEO TOURISM IN OMAN

9.1 INTRODUCTION

9.2 ICPI AS A DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING TOOL FOR ARCHAEO TOURISM IN OMAN

9.2.1 Integrated Quality PIN Management

9.2.2 Dynamic and Creative PIN

9.2.3 Mindful Interpretive Experience

9.2.3.1 Constructivist PIN

9.2.3.2 Authentic PIN

9.2.3.3 Safe PIN

9.2.3.4 Sensible PIN

9.2.4 Thematic PIN

9.2.4.1 Quality PIN

9.2.4.2 Core-Peripheral Linkage

9.2.4.3 Oriented PIN

9.2.5 Community PIN

9.2.5.1 Communities and their socio-cultural context

9.2.5.2 Community as a stakeholder

9.2.6 Phased PIN

9.3 SUMMARY
9.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to delineate the potential of ICPI in communicating various values of AH in Oman. By giving examples, it shows how to put ICPI into work and become part of the solution for many of the discussed issues in regard to PC, SSC and SCC in order to develop archaeotourism in Oman in particular. The richness of heritage resources, including archaeological sites, and the ambitious governmental development plans for sustainable heritage-tourism represent two incentive factors to consider the application of integrative approaches such as ICPI. This is to establish quality tourism in the long-term for all stakeholders without compromising the sustainability of heritage resources and their contexts.

The discussion here is grounded on the literature review in chapters three, four and eight, as well as the research findings where the criterion and opportunistic sites are utilized to provide practical examples from the case study.

9.2. ICPI AS A DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING TOOL FOR ARCHAEOTOURISM IN OMAN

It is misleading to assume that ICPI is the typical framework for solving the entire set of inhibitive issues facing PIN of AH as a profession in Oman. Simply, this is due to the changeable dynamic nature of PIN per se as an industry and the three contexts impact in which it is situated. For example, in regard to SCC, it is expected that the advancement in scientific and political thought as well as the social and economic progress would
eventually nurture the sentiment against the dominance of the tribal role in Oman (Ministry of National Economy 2003a). In another word, SCC might have a less influence in the future because of the wider context influence such as modernization and globalization process (Wang 1999, Ratz 2000, Sadler 2003).

Notwithstanding, ICPI is an attempt to consider the main aspects that might help an interpretive plan to become appropriate and successful. It is expected that ICPI as such would be supportive in accomplishing the following objectives of Oman’s Vision for the tourism sector (Parsons International Limited 2002: 2-3) which are:

- a distinct, highly attractive quality tourist destination that showcases Oman’s natural assets, culture, heritage and people;
- a highly competitive regional tourism experience;
- a diverse range of high quality tourism products throughout the country with facilities and services that provide desirable destinations and activities year around; and
- the development of partnerships between government and the tourism industry stakeholders.

In this sense, the rationale underpinning ICPI approach is that by proposing a compelling strategy to integrate all these objectives as a whole, a further step has been taken to develop heritage-based tourism in Oman generally and archaeotourism in

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294 According to Sadler (2003: 30), 'In recent years, globalization has accelerated as a result of the increasing adoption of free-trade policies and the deregulation of market, policies vigorously pursued by the member countries of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (WTO).’ Also, Wang (1999: 358) argued that 'with the accelerating globalization under postmodern conditions, it is increasingly difficult for the authenticity of the original, such as the marginal ethnic culture, to remain immutable'.

295 For example, ICPI does conform to those objectives listed by Bradley (1982) and the characteristics discussed by Oliver and Jenkins (2005) (see Section 8.4.2.2).
particular. ICPI empowers the competitiveness of Oman as its main strength is derived basically from the authentic various heritage resources (Parsons International Limited 2002).

In the following sections, six interconnected characteristics for ICPI are discussed to demonstrate how this approach can be utilized as a tool or guideline for SSC to develop the applicability and effectiveness of sustainable PIN for AH in Oman\textsuperscript{296}. These characteristics are: 1) Integrated Quality PIN Management; 2) Dynamism and Creativity; 3) Mindful Experience; 4) Thematic PIN; 5) Community-led Approach; and 6) Phased PIN.

\textbf{9.2.1. Integrated Quality PIN Management}

As it appeared from the discussion in Chapter Eight, by considering an integrative planning perspective, quality PIN may accrue, i.e. quality experience, quality management and quality heritage tourism chain. As the research findings show, in Oman the macro-context of AH does strongly support the adoption of ICPI for PIN as the national policy emphasizes this. For example, Article III of NHPL 1980 stated the importance of establishing a cooperative committee composed of several governmental authorities. Also, \textit{The Final Priority Action Plan for Tourism Development in Oman} (Parsons International Limited 2002: 1) in Oman included:

\textsuperscript{296} For practical concerns, it is worthwhile to mention here that sustainable interpretation should not be linked or necessarily means a typical status of sustainability; all approaches to sustainability are suggestive and not conclusive because 'no project can have solely positive effects and there are sometimes unintended negative impacts despite all the preventive measures taken' (World Tourism Organization 2005: 5).
Chapter Nine: ICPI Approach, Archaeological Heritage and Archaelourism in Oman

Oman has outstanding natural, heritage, and cultural assets located throughout the country and their incorporation in new tourism products will expand the net benefits gained by the people of Oman.

In respect to AH in particular, the findings have assured that this can not be achieved in Oman without considering PC, SSC and SCC as a whole by adopting an integrative management approaches (see Section 8.2). The current approach for communicating primary interpretations at historical monuments, forts and castles, can be described as a disconnected presentation where the wider cultural context is absent; only historical facts are provided about the monument, e.g. Sohar Fort. Accordingly, visitors are disconnected as well from the wider context, especially in the lack of a particular theme capable of linking the monument to its surrounding because mostly 'people remember themes they forget facts' (Ham 1992: 39).

Visitors here see every attraction in isolation from others, there is no big concept or a whole picture in which this attraction is connected to. Similar to visitors, the locals are disconnected as well since there is no visible functional role in their contemporary life system. Therefore, through a cooperative network, ICPI endeavours to promote PIN from being disconnected, positivistic and official-led to be a thematic, interactive and holistic; an approach that considers both a whole context and the whole person. This has been supported by the characteristics of Oman’s AH as discussed in Section 2.6 where in many cases archaeological landscapes can be linked sensibly and chronologically to the present cultural landscape context to complement and strengthen the main idea of the selected thematic storylines.
Chapter Nine: ICPI Approach, Archaeological Heritage and Archaetourism in Oman

The continuity of environmental setting, local socio-economic and sometimes socio-cultural factors in some areas through the ages helps in connecting AH, tangibly and intangibly, to the present Omani heritage and people ways of lives which symbolize 'the contemporary use of pasts' (Ashworth 2006: 23). Yet, an important point to be raised here is that linking past societies to the contemporary ones does not mean to ignore the uniqueness or 'strangeness of past societies' (Owen 1996: 205). The present heritage is not the typical interpretation for the gone past, but represents one way to make PIN more sensible, understandable, realistic and attached to observable factual information (see Section 3.6.2). For instance, AM33 talked about this in respect to Magan culture by saying:

'...we have to figure out what was exactly Magan. We used a lot of local data. We should be careful in the fact that Magan was in the past, and the past has never looked exactly like the present. What I would really try to avoid is the idea that Magan and Oman are the same thing. There have been a lot of historical changes. We still have a lot to learn about Magan'.

By using the Thematic Chronological-Spatial Interpretation, it would be possible for visitors to link archaeological ruins and turtles at Ras al-Jinz to the current present seafaring life of the local community. The archaeological excavations from Ras al-Jinz produced several findings which still represent an integral part of the cultural landscape. This includes such objects as abundant green-turtle and bones, fish-hooks, net sinkers, incense burners and others (Cleuziou and Tosi 2000). For example, the burning of aromatics was and still an everyday activity performed with locally manufactured objects.
Another example is the copper mining and smelting in Sohar where the ancient mining sites at Arja are located. Sohar area has mining traditions dating back at least to the third millennium B.C and extensive mining activities taking place today at some nearby regions. Today, it is still possible for visitors to observe this industry, especially that some Omani handicrafts in Sohar depend on copper as a raw material. The same can be said about Bat area where remains for ancient irrigations system were discovered (Frifelt 2002a, Weisgerber et al. 2002). The irrigation system which is known in Oman as aflajs is commonly used and represents a vital part of the people daily life, mainly in the northern part of Oman.\textsuperscript{297}

By looking at Bat (Figure 9.1), the partial reconstruction of tomb 401 is not enough to communicate the values of AH in this area. In visiting Bat and exploring its cultural landscape, the diversity appears to be of a potential part of its competitiveness (Figure 9.2), where in addition to the necropolis, there are other types of sites dating to different phases such as the iron age village at al-Banah and al-Batin (ca. 2600 B.C) which is the oldest slag heaps of Oman (Weisgerber 2005).

\textsuperscript{297} At Bat village, there are still some aflajs such as Falaj al-Zubi and Falaj al-Suiyah.
Figure 9.1: An aerial photograph portrays the diversity of heritage components at Bat area (Readapted from the National Survey Authority, Oman).

Also, some of the heritage resources are the palm-tree farms, rural oasis, *wadis* (water streams), historical monuments and locals' life-style in Bat. The outer area of Bat includes natural attractions, such as the attractive cave of al-Iraqi or al-Kittan, located ca 8km north of Ibri (Hanna and al-Belushi 1996).
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Built Heritage → Natural Heritage → Living Heritage

- Archaeological Heritage; e.g., Bat, al-Ain.
- Forts and Castles; e.g., Burj al-Ghailah, Hisn al-Ward.
- Historical Quarters; e.g., Harat al-Ghailah, Harat al-Ward.
- Afij; e.g., Falaj al-Zubbi, Falaj al-Salyah.
- Caves; e.g. Al-Araiq Cave.
- Trekking Trails; e.g., Bat to Wadi al-Ain, Wadi Dilm.
- Climbing.
- Desert Tourism.
- Rural Oases; e.g., Wadi al-Ain.
- Ethno-tourism.
- Handicrafts.
- Folk stories, dancing, traditional music and dancing.
- Traditional Costumes.
- Agro-tourism; e.g., Palm-tree farms.

Figure 9.2: Some of the heritage components that can be thematically integrated with the archaeological heritage at Bat and al-Ayn.

Similar to Bat, Figure 9.3 shows that Bahla Oasis is another compelling example where various heritage components are located in the surrounding cultural landscape. One of the respondents mentioned that ‘When we talk about Bahla as a touristic attraction we have to think of it as a whole, not only the fort. Its cultural and natural attractions complement one another’ (AM6). Here, a self-guided trail by using the Thematic Chronological-Spatial Interpretation can be easily designed (Table 9.1). This might explain why Bahla is one of the top visited destinations and most memorable places in Oman (Parsons International Limited 2002).298

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298 Similarly, AM17 and AS11 talked about the frankincense sites which are located in Dhofar region where archaeological sites are located close to one another and surrounded by rich heritage resources, especially geological and ethnographic.
Figure 9.3: An aerial photograph for part of Bahla Oasis (Modified after Deutsches Bergbau-Museum 1998)

### Chronological Dimension

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spatial Dimension</th>
<th>2500 B.C</th>
<th>1000 B.C</th>
<th>Pre-Islamic</th>
<th>Islamic</th>
<th>Present</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bahla City Centre</td>
<td>Skeleton remains in the Grand Mosques</td>
<td>Al-Qasabah, the southern eastern part of the fort</td>
<td>Part of the wall &amp; the Grand Mosque, small mosques</td>
<td>The old market, Pottery Factory Aflaj, Mountains &amp; palm-trees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Quarters</td>
<td>Parts of the walls, Ibn Barakha School</td>
<td>Jibrin Castle</td>
<td>Handicrafts, and falaj</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jibrin Oasis</td>
<td></td>
<td>Iron Age Tombs, Salut Battlefield</td>
<td>Irrigation canals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bisiya</td>
<td>Umm an Nar tombs</td>
<td></td>
<td>Rural sceneries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9.1: An example for a possible local *Thematic Chronological-Spatial Interpretation* in Bahla area

To facilitate the integration of various heritage components, *Thematic Chronological-Spatial Interpretation* can be used here at local, regional or national levels. For instance,
to communicate that ‘Magan is the land of copper’ inter-regional integration of various mining sites and settlements could help in conveying this idea in an effective and attractive way to audience (Figure 9.4).

Figure 9.4: A map for the ancient copper mining sites in the northern Oman where an inter-regional Thematic Chronological-Spatial Interpretation can be created (modified from Weisgerber 1978b: 16).

Another theme can be based on the scientific research about the ancient oasis settlements in Oman (BX3, BX7). Similarly, and according to evidence, Oman was in the third millennium B.C a growing oasis culture (Potts 1990, Orchard 1994, Cleuziou and Tosi 2000, Frifelt 2002a). Similar to Ras al-Jinz in the coast, al-Maysar in the eastern region, Wadi al-Ayn and Bat were very active settlements by that time. Also,

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drawing on the archaeological research, thematic trails for the ancient caravan routes have been suggested (AM13, AS8, AS10)\(^3\).

To accomplish integration effectively, there is a need to establish a *cross-sectoral partnership* (Cochrane and Tapper 2006) in coordination with the local community and voluntarily groups. For AH to become an integral part of the heritage tourism system in Oman, there is a need for an integrative partnership to create a collective stewardship and involve other stakeholders. Therefore, one of the main principles for ICPI is to develop heritage PIN in general from being guided by a limited number of governmental institutions (MOHC, MOT, OCA) and focused on few forts and castles to be holistically planned, implemented, managed, promoted and evaluated by setting up a cooperative partnership.

This is crucial for the quality of PIN as AM18 emphasized that ‘PIN of archaeological sites should be done in consultation with MOT...who understands how does this site fit in the overall program of tourists’. In return, AM20 insisted that the MOHC should pay more effort in bridging the gap with other governmental institutions as well\(^3\) which is important to accomplish sustainable PIN and archaetourism (BX3). In this context, BX3 mentioned the following:

\(^3\) For example, Frifelt (2002a: 101) wrote the following ‘Bat was a centre for the traffic that went north-south and east out to the Gulf of Oman. About 200 km to the south was the salt quarry of Qalat al-Mih, not so far south but further east the mining site of Maysar. Ca. 130 km to the north was the fertile Buraimi oasis, and from there it was only 120 km to the west coast, less along the Wadi Jizzi to the east coast. From Bat over the well-peopled Wadi Ayn’.

\(^3\) AM20 included that MOT ‘can not develop the tourism industry by itself, there must be some sort of national institution or centre to help and provide the Ministry with reliable decisions and regulations in relation to archaeological and historical sites instead of relying on foreigners or particular individuals...This would help in establishing a central reference and unified sources of information, supervision, and administration’.
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MOHC should be consulted about tourist visits to archaeological sites, and since some of the archaeological sites occupy large areas of land, the whole question of local access would also need to be discussed. Tourist visits should be very carefully planned. Remember, too many unrestrained visitors could destroy the very things you want them to see.

Therefore, integrative approach to partnership is required to minimize the negative impacts on PC and achieve sustainable PIN. For instance, the diversion of the current crossing roads at Bat would require the cooperation with the Ministry of Transportation. As well, the ownership of those lands surrounding towers, namely, 1145, 1146 and 1147, suggests the involvement of the Ministry of Awqaf and the Ministry of Housing as well.

In addition to the locals and governmental involvement, the findings endorsed the importance of partial privatization of PIN where the involvement of private sector in the tourism industry has been one of the main aims for the Omani government (Ministry of National Economy 2001). Therefore, this sector should be well-informed on the priorities of the government through ‘the provision of a clear framework for both public sector and private sector tourism investment’ (Parsons International Limited 2002: 4).

AM24 and AM36 assured that the involvement of the private sector in PIN could help in overcoming some financial and technical problems. Also, to deal with these two problems in particular, some respondents suggested an international interpretive linkage and cooperation. Possible international linkages have been acknowledged by archaeological scientific research which makes this more sensible and applicable, e.g. the frankincense trade in the south and Magan culture in the north. To explain, geographically Magan culture includes U.A.E which owns some of the best-preserved
archaeological sites, such as Umm an-Nar and Hilli Park. Therefore, AM27 implied the importance of interpreting Magan in cooperation with the U.A.E government where museum, for instance, are more developed. Also, based on archaeological research, and due to the big number of variety of tombs in Oman Peninsula\textsuperscript{302}, spatially and chronologically (Figure 9.5), some respondents suggested the creation of international thematic trails related to the funerary architecture (BX1, BX2). This has been supported by the fact that currently tourists do come to Bahla on their way from the U.A.E to Nizwa and Muscat (BX3).

According to Horner and Swarbrooke (2004: 109), ‘while Dubai is well-provided for modern consumer shopping tourism, the rapid development has limited its appeal for cultural or heritage tourists’. Therefore, there is a considerable potential has been identified in the Regional Western Expatriate market, as there are some 300,000 expatriates in this group in the the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, GCC, including about 50,000 in the U.A.E (Parsons International Limited 2002: 8)\textsuperscript{303}. A current joint visa agreement with the U.A.E provides the freedom of movement of tourists between the two countries (Ministry of Information 2004).

\textsuperscript{302} This is not surprising since ‘graves are the most prominent prehistoric remains in Oman where, for example, a huge amount of them extends from al-Ayn to Dhank area, ca. 30 km south Ibri’ (Gentelle and Frifelt 1989: 119).

\textsuperscript{303} Also, AM29 mentioned that there are about 30,000-35,000 Japanese tourists who visit Dubai annually.
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Figure 9.5: A map shows some of the third millennium B.C sites in the U.A.E and Oman where international-based Thematic Chronological-Spatial Interpretation can be designed based on shared history (modified after Orchard and Orchard 1997).

Another possible international linkage can be established based on ancient frankincense trade routes which, beside Oman, they might include several Middle Eastern countries such as the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, GCC, Egypt, Jordan and Yemen304 (see Shackley 2001). Yemen, in particular, could become the main partner where there are ‘cooperative cultural, social and historical connections’ (Ministry of Information 2006: 61). This means, that those visitors who wish to follow the length of the ancient frankincense route from Yemen to Oman and vice versa can do this more easily than before as supported by AM34.

304 In this context, Shackley (2001: 1) wrote: ‘It has been suggested that the diverse single-country frankincense-based tours could be linked into a major international ‘Frankincense Route’, necessitating joint product and marketing initiatives like those developed for the UNWTO ‘Silk Road’ program.’
Another aspect to be mentioned in this section is that it is important for quality PIN to appreciate the potentiality and uniqueness of the context in which PIN will be operated, thus, a successful interpretive plan at one area can not be randomly applied to another even at the local geographic dimension. Any interpretive product should be embedded and directly connected to the interpreted unit according to its specific context where every region in Oman is different in its geographical and archaeological features (AM34, BX7).

Also, it should be remembered that the Integrated Interpretive Network should be designed in a way that provides various experiences where every interpretive unit utilizes its own special character that provides different and complementary experience. Diversity is ‘likely to be beneficial for attracting a more diverse range of visitors’ (Mcloughlin et al. 2006a: 9). As well, from a sustainable perspective, considering diversity could be helpful in reducing the over-consumption of touristic resources where, for instance, at Wahiba Sand in al-Sharqiyah region, there is an over-supply of the same product by the locals in a very small geographical area; this has resulted in negative impacts on the Sand due to the lack of visitor management and aggressive competition between the individual desert-tourism camps (Mershen 2006).

9.2.2. Dynamic and Creative PIN

As mentioned before that ICPI approach does not consider PIN for AH as a final product, but as a changeable process. Thus, it is imperative for a holistic interpretive planning to adopt a dynamic strategy and being creative to cope up with the unpredictable status of both the micro-context and macro-context. There is no single
blueprint and a set of fixed rules to be applied for all contexts. The dynamic constructive processes, socio-cultural values, technology, the natural and man-made factors, the knowledge and technology and market are few driving examples to consider dynamism as a principle when interpreting an archaeological site.

In this sense, planning and marketing must reflect this dynamism as the international market continually faces change because of demographic shifts, changing lifestyle values, and rapidly evolving technologies (Sweeney 2002: 3). What makes this so important for Oman is the rapid development and modernization processes, including the tourism sector, where phased PIN is required (see Section 9.2.6). Also, searching for creative approaches for interpreting AH has been supported by some respondents (e.g. AM35, AS11). Herein, the appointed interpretive team needs to adapt for tackling changing situations by considering different strategies in PIN. Therefore, Sweeney’s (2002: 4) report included:

*Destination Oman must be clear, clever, creative and consistent in its marketing communications and product development if it is to be seen and appreciated as a very distinct destination.*

**9.2.3. Mindful Interpretive Experience**

In contrast with the current interpretive approach used in historical monuments in Oman, ICPI endeavours to communicate sense-on interpretive experience for visitors where Oman has the potential to improve its competitiveness and play a significant role in diversifying and expanding tourism experiences. ICPI could help improving ‘Oman’s unique positioning as a somewhat exotic and authentic Arabic destination with a highly diverse range of tourism experience’ (Parsons International Limited 2002: 7). To explain this more, the following sections will discuss this in regard to four aspects
which are: 1) Constructivist Experience; 2) Authentic Experience; 3) Safe Experience; and 4) Sensible Interpretive Experience (Figure 9.6).

Figure 9.6: Four suggested elements necessary to convey a mindful interpretive experience.

9.2.3.1. Constructivist PIN

The significance of providing constructivist experience interpretation has been discussed in different parts of chapters three and four. Therefore, considering the constructed previous experience of visitors in PIN of AH is essential (BX1). To accomplish this, AM18 suggested that 'we have to understand the mentality and the psychology of the consumer and then we have to adapt our product to match it'. For instance, the consideration of such aspects as the education system and lifestyles have to be considered while interpreting for the Omani public, yet at various levels; i.e. rural or urban. Also, based on the visitors profile for the non-omani visitors and the market segments mentioned in Section 6.3.1, considering constructivist interpretive approaches could be more desirable and suitable than positivistic ones.
In compare to the current learning and teaching approaches in Oman, it is also presumed that the dependency on ICPI perspective in communicating AH would be more effective and enjoyable. For instance, on-site visits and firsthand experience are more supported to relate and reveal meanings about Magan culture, for instance, instead of merely presenting factual information (AM3, AM7, AM9, AM13, AM30, AM36, AS2, AS4). A sensory experience can be stimulated by promoting encounters with real objects, experience and participation (Uzzell 1998b, Gyimothy and Johns 2001). According to ICPI approach, sense-on experience refers to the involvement as many as possible of visitors’ senses while communicating the different collected messages from the various interpretive units. It is in this context, ICPI encourages what Urry (2002: 146) called the ‘sensuous experience’ or multi-sensuously experience where ‘in almost all situations different senses are inter-connected with each other to produce a sensed environment of people and objects distributed across time and space’.

Another important point to prepare a constructivist interpretive experience is the integration of both tangible and intangible heritage to convey and enrich visitors’ Total Interpretive Experience. For example, the inherited folk stories about archaeological sites, such as in Shisur Wubar, Shir and Bahla, can be used as part of infotainment/edutainment programs or in personal-based interpretive services. In addition to the built heritage, the inclusion of the natural and living heritage resources by using the Thematic Chronological-Spatial Interpretation, for instance, could help in

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305 For instance, AM18 mentioned that ‘The more glass cases you have, the less interesting to them [audience]...I want to go to a museum where I can touch, where I can feel, and then it becomes more interactive... A pottery behind glasses does not mean anything to a child’.
constructing a comprehensive chronological picture about the past of a particular area as discussed in Chapter Eight. Also, as a themed PIN is important in ICPI, it could be used to strengthen a constructivist perspective to interpretation. Cognitively, humans are better able to understand and relate to a main message when the individual parts are presented as a linked theme (Ham 1992, Veverka 1994, Brochu and Merriman 2002).

Also, in order for Omani tour guides to relate the main merits of the selected theme they need to be more professional and trained, better educated and equipped with sociological and psychological knowledge (Cohen et al. 2002, Reisinger and Steiner 2006). Therefore, some respondents (e.g. AM7, AM15, AM18, AM20, AM24, AM25, AM34, AS10) believe that tour guidance is a crucial job where tour guides must be well-trained and speak the language of the group being guided to communicate realistic and accurate information about the interpreted landscape. This becomes more important by looking at the tourist trends described earlier and the targeted market, e.g. special interest, school students and families (see Section 6.3.1).

For example, some respondents emphasized the differences between special interest tourists and the average tourists (e.g. AM14, AS9, AS13) where communication methods appropriate for the former may not be acceptable to the latter. Therefore, specialized tour guides in AH are crucial for those who are more interested to have in-depth experience (AM10, AM19, AS3, AS13, BX5). In addition to this, it is presumed that the local guide is more capable of communicating constructivist interpretive

\[306 \text{ AM18 mentioned that 'the tourists look at the tour guide as main entrance to the country. They take his words, they believe him, they think of him as a representative of the nation. It is a crucial job; it is like appointing an ambassador'.} \]
experience as this appears from the community-based tourism in Wahibah Sand in al-Sharqiyah region and in Jaddat al-Harasis in al-Wusta region where many local Bedouins are working as guides, particularly in regard to desert tourism (Dutton 1988, Mershen 2006).

9.2.3.2. Authentic PIN

One of the important elements that might influence the Total Interpretive Experience quality of visitors is the authenticity of the interpreted subject or object. Through the Integrated Interpretive Network, the Integrated Interpretive Themes and Thematic Chronological-Spatial Interpretation, ICPI encourages visitors to explore AH in their original settings and in relation to their wider context. This can be supported by the fact that most AH in Oman can be considered as living archaeological and historical heritage which is located in rural countryside, where ‘tourist spaces’ (Urry 2002: 9) are limited, e.g. Bat, Qalhat, Shir, Wubar Shisur. For instance, the trekking trails designed by MOT (2005a) passé by various cultural heritage resources where a tourist-host contact is unavoidable (AM3, Dale and Hadwin 2001). To give an example, Reinhard Siegl (personal communication: 13/January/2006) assured that the trekking trails of al-Sharqiyah region pass through the towers and villages in Shir.

The current pre-planned itineraries and all-inclusive packaged experience used by the tourists in Oman prevent a direct self-discovery experience and intercultural interacts.

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307 According to the model suggested by Weiler and Ham (2002) for the development of tour guidance in developing countries, it appears that more emphasis has been placed on the local training and local trainers, supervisors and evaluators.

308 The status is similar in many other Arabic countries such as Yemen, the old city of Sana’a (Al-Maqalih 2001) and Jordan, the restored Taibet Zaman Tourist Village (Fakhoury 2001, Daher 2006) and the Jordan River Valley Touristway (Shunnaq et al. 2008).

309 See also Siegl (2005) and http://www.omantourism.gov.om/
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with local communities which is now ‘at the lower level’ (al-Masroori 2006: 340). Instead of this enclave experience or ‘formal tourism’ (Oppermann 1993: 552), ICPI encourages the development of intimate relations with the local hosts than with foreigners to learn about the ‘local insider meanings’ of a particular cultural landscape than ‘broader outsider meanings’ (Knudson et al. 2007: 229) and to have a back region experience than front region one (MacCannell 1989). This means PIN should be designed heuristically as discussed by Aldridge (1975, 1989) and should not become a surrogate for the real context which could be the reason behind the actual visit. A possible authentic experience can be done through ‘thematic walking tours’ (Markwell et al. 2004: 460) which is an approach used to construct a personal sense of place for locals and visitors alike and to create a self-directed interpretive tour\textsuperscript{310}. Therefore, some AH resources, particularly in the peripheral areas, could be integrated and mapped in the trekking trails which are mainly designed to trace the ancient walking paths (e.g. AM9, AM10, AM35).

Also, the interaction and exchange between the locals and visiting people through craft villages, for example, could provide a prime source for travel experience beyond the hospitality industry (Evan 1994, Novell and Benson 2005). Moreover, the reliance on a well-informed and trained local tour guides than foreigners to communicate the cultural landscape features might create more sense of the place and its past (Black et al. 2001, Weiler and Ham 2002)\textsuperscript{311} and enforce more community-based PIN (see Section 9.2.5). They are more aware of the heritage in their surroundings (AM15, AM24, AU4, AU6)

\textsuperscript{310} Deborah et al. (2001: 271) suggested that ‘mangers should consider developing themed packages that provide highly specialized heritage tourists’.

\textsuperscript{311} Hill and Cable (2006: 63) concluded that interpretive specialists can guide the audience to create more authentic personal experience by communicating a broad view of authenticity where they can provide more and better ways to provide it.
and could provide people with ‘more real experience of the country’ (AM18). Yet, the desire to have an authentic experience must not be reached at the account of the ‘cultural carrying capacity’ (Robinson 1999: 7). This is important since many archaeological sites are still a live context and a vital part of the inhabitants’ hometown where they practice their daily life, e.g. Bahla, Bat.

Another point to be mentioned here is the *simulated authenticity* (Breathnach 2006) or *constructed authenticity* (Hill and Cable 2006), such as experimental archaeology and reconstruction, which can be used to make archaeological sites more understandable by giving more physical experience than imagination (AS6, BX4). However, in this case, the interpretive team is strongly reminded not to deceive visitors, but inform them as part of PIN integrity and ethics.

### 9.2.3.3. Safe PIN

One of the main ways that PIN can contribute to the quality of visitor’s experience is by making the interpreted context safe, intellectually and physically. Intellectual safety can be achieved by ‘providing information to encourage safety and comfort’ (Moscardo 1998: 4). Also, through reciprocal positive cross-cultural and host-guest interaction; thus, the *Leadership and Partnership Board* should strongly consider the development of policies and directive guidelines for ICIP that organize this critical aspect. However, as these policies would become part of the interpretive sphere and affect the interpretive experience they should be crafted carefully and efficiently.

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For instance, AM15 said: ‘Always the local tour guide is the most appropriate candidate to communicate his/her heritage; he/she knows better than any expatriate’.
Also, these policies need to congruent with the national legislation and the micro-context of the interpreted area. The Managerial and Marketing Strategy in coordination with the board should make sure that both visitors and host communities understand their rights and obligations according to the stated national and international policies for tourism in Oman\textsuperscript{313}, especially within those living and sacred archaeological areas, e.g. the Grand Mosque in Bahla and graves in Dhofar region.

In addition to this, securing the physical safety is a complementary part to the intellectual where the locals, for example, can be part of the physical orientation and guiding system, especially in such remote sites as Shenah and Shisur Wubar. It should be remembered that some of these sites are difficult to be accessed, e.g. Shir, or located within or nearby insecure physical context, e.g. Arja (see Chapter Five).

\textbf{9.2.3.4. Sensible PIN}

Senseless PIN happens when one or more parts of the provided PIN is not congruent with the context in which it is situated; thus, this might influence the \textit{Total Interpretive Experience} of some visitors. Therefore, it is expected that all of the various integrated components make sense of one another without intruding senseless dissonant components that conflict with the wider context intellectually and physically. Intellectually means that interpretive infrastructure within a particular cultural landscape should not be dissonant at the account of the socio-cultural values of the local society.

\textsuperscript{313} Weightman (1987: 236) included that 'uncontrolled intercultural contact is more detrimental than beneficial to the socio-cultural well-being of host peoples'.

As for the physical sense, it has been discussed in Section 2.6 that Oman’s AH is in harmony with its physiographic environmental context. Therefore, to sustain this harmonic integrity, it is imperative to avoid applying and practicing any interpretive provision or intrusion that does not match with the integrity of AH and its surrounding physical context. For instance, instead of applying improper restoration works at Bahla Fort and the infill buildings at al-Balid Park, ICPI maintains the importance of using of environment-friendly materials (e.g. heritage hotel and vernacular architecture). Otherwise this might lead to senseless PIN as the ‘sense of place has to do with the use of specific materials found locally’ (World Tourism Organization 2005: 3).

ICPI is against the idea of any misusing of AH where a site is taken out of its context or the context is overlooked, the thing that can add an extra dissonant dimension as this has been argued by Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996). To avoid such unsustainable status, the establishment of a national interpretive directive ethics and legislation is important as this is confirmed by AM19.

9.2.4. Thematic PIN

Section 3.8.1 referred to the importance of using thematic PIN with measurable objectives in communicating AH values where different sites are organized around one or more particular idea. Also, this has been supported by respondents, such as BX1, who mentioned that thematic PIN would be ‘an excellent approach to the archaeology of Oman, whereby sites of different periods and nature, archaeological and ethnographic sites, as well as sites spread over a wide geographical area could be integrated into a sensible theme’. Therefore, the second and third phases in ICPI highlight the importance of themeing in PIN.
Several benefits for the thematic PIN have been mentioned (sections 3.8.1, 8.3.1, 8.4.2.2); however, in this section only three are discussed in relation to ICPI which are: 1) quality PIN; 2) core-peripheral linkage; 3) oriented PIN.

9.2.4.1. Quality PIN

Having a theme could prevent duplication which is one of the observable weaknesses in presenting the historical facts of forts and castles in Oman (AM21) where there are poor duplicated generic ideas randomly organized without a focal and oriented message. Also, there are no meaningful concepts that can relate to visitor’s previous experience and lives. Moreover, the uniqueness of each historical monument here is underestimated, compromised and hence lost. Therefore, AM14 emphasized that MOT should design themes that are suitable for the history of each fort and the region in which it is located.

Part of this issue is the lack of thematic interpretive media (e.g. thematic map, thematic guides, and thematic souvenirs) which are basically designed to convey and support the selected theme in particular. A historic or regular geographic map is slightly different from the thematic one where the latter should be more focused to help visitors to see various linkages amongst the interpreted sites and sights. It connects one interpretive unit to another within the cultural landscape. Besides, it leads visitors to other available alternatives and opportunities in the interpretive network.

Also, in Oman where financial and human resources in developing PIN are limited for the time being, and there is a rapid development process, it is important to consider the
use of thematic PIN. Having a theme could save time, money and effort to handle information by focusing on exactly the main theme suggested for particular resources (Ham 1992, Veverka 1994). As for the audience, interpreters must consider that sometimes limited amount of time is available to communicate the holistic context of the archaeological site. Based on Section 3.8.1, having a central theme is more helpful for visitors to gain a particular knowledge and focus their intellectual effort and cognitive mapping on the main ideas of PIN.

9.2.4.2. Core-Peripheral Linkage

As ICPI is not totally oriented toward commercial values, the consideration of remote sites in Oman as sources for educational, recreational and social values, at least for the local communities, is highly supported. This is important as many of these areas will rely on tourism as the one main form of economic development. One of the best examples is Shisur Wubar as confirmed by AM21 and AU4 who referred to the local socio-economic benefits. This has been supported by many other respondents who mentioned that remote sites, such as Shir, Qalhat and Shenah, might become an integral part of adventure tourism (AM10, AM35, AS1, AS4). This kind of focused tourism appears to be one possible option for the development of PIN of AH and archaeotourism in Oman and links between core and peripheral sites.

314 AU4 said: ‘Shisur is different because tourists, particularly the Western, enjoy staying in the desert more than in the urban; accordingly, they spend more time and money. Many of them like to follow the step of Wilfred Thesiger who crossed the Empty Quarter. The Arabian Sands became more famous after his trips in Oman from 1945-1950’.

315 In addition to the establishment of national core-peripheral linkages amongst archaeological sites themselves and between them and other heritage resources within the country, the thematic PIN does strengthen the goal of establishing an international cooperative partnership. One important fact about AH of Oman is that it can be interpreted beyond its national spatial dimension. This can be done under the sponsorship and supervision of intergovernmental and/or international organizations.
Since most of the archaeological landscapes in Oman are located in the rural peripheral areas, some of the thematic PIN may be utilized to connect these landscapes to core active interpretive units\textsuperscript{316}. By using the \textit{Thematic Chronological-Spatial Interpretation}, for instance, the flow of tourists from a developed core to a less developed periphery can be increased in searching for new experiences that might not be available in the core (Prideaux 2002).

Creating historical trails through abandoned sites far from the over-consumed attractions plays a major role in prompting for sites that might stand unnoticed or underused in the midst of undistinguished architecture (English Tourism Council 2000). Therefore, the ancient mountainous trekking trails designed by MOT, for instance, can be developed to link AH and other heritage resources in the core areas to those sites and resources in the less visited areas and/or with less population where the density of population is low (AM3, Reinhard Siegl: personal communication: 13/January/2006)\textsuperscript{317}.

\textbf{9.2.4.3. Oriented PIN}

Besides having a particular topic, the objectives of a particular theme might be oriented toward a specific group of audience, especially for local people. Therefore, to know visitors is part of any successful PIN (Uzzell 1998c, Falk and Dierking 1992). In regard to Oman, the discussed in Section 6.3.1 and the current SCC are in favour of designing

\textsuperscript{316} In this term, AM14 pointed out that \textit{`We have to consider all sites, and not only the attractive and easy-reached sites'}.

\textsuperscript{317} In regard to this, AM3 mentioned \textit{`trekkers may enjoy various natural and cultural attractions, including many archaeological and historical sites...The Eastern Hajar trekking trails, in particular, are full of archaeological sites; wherever you go, there are some ancient graves or other archaeological features'}.
Chapter Nine: ICPI Approach, Archaeological Heritage and Archaeotourism in Oman

oriented themes toward some niche markets, namely special interest tourists, school parties and families (Ministry of Commerce and Industry 2001, Sweeney 2002).

These groups deserve a serious attention while planning for PIN in the first phase where in assessing the choice between mass and focused tourism in Oman, the Tourism Marketing Strategy report is in favour of considering the focused tourism. Thus, this should be reflected in the provided programs and interpretive infrastructure. This is in order ‘to avoid the threat of undermining Oman’s social and economic fabric and the decline of the destination, as opposed to the potential contribution to the economy and the long-term sustainability of the destination’ (Ministry of Commerce and Industry 2001: 12).

Oman is a young society where 66.96% of the population is under the age of 25 years (Ministry of National Economy 2004a: Table 7-2). With some 596,895 school students in the governmental and private (Ministry of Information 2006: 97) it can be imagined how promising this niche is. This expresses the necessity of designing oriented thematic interpretive programs for this particular group where thematic PIN is ‘used to increase knowledge gain from interpretive programs with educational goals’ (Tarlton and Ward 2006: 7). What makes this more important is that currently many private schools take their students to visit historical and archaeological sites, especially during the weekend (AM31). Another possible benefit for considering this market is its importance to generate out-of-season revenue where ‘the diversity of the educational market may be

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318 According to some research in Wales (e.g. Prentice 1995, Gruffudd et al. 1998, Mytum 2000), the engagement of children with archaeological sites and objects makes the past easier to be understood and communicates various values such as national identity.
though to counter the opportunity for product and service developments’ (Prentice 1995: 166).

Another related aspect to this is the consideration of socio-cultural values for Omani visitors. For instance, as the social context is of importance in PIN (Prentice and Light 1994), gender segregation in amenity, interpretive programs and activities might be required; this is highly observed in the public services in Oman. In addition to the domestic market, the family-oriented themes should be promoted to accommodate the increasing regional and international market. The Managerial and Marketing Strategy should target such segments as families groups, including Muslim families (Sweeney 2002: 28). This is important as the current PIN does not encourage family-based tourism (see sections 6.2.6.1 and 6.3.1). Doing so, could help in decreasing tourism seasonality, particularly in Dhofar region in the south where there has been considerable potential for tourist inflows from residents of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, GCC, as a close source market, especially during al-Khareef season in the south (Parsons International Limited 2002).  

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319 This has been supported by Uzzell (1998a: 18) who mentioned that ‘in every survey we have undertaken, we have found that family and friendship groups make up at least 90 per cent of the visitors’. Also, Milman’s (2001) study predicted that the family market would be the core of the theme parks and attractions’ industry, and that it would become more services oriented, offering less passive and more interactive experience; many visitors will expect more than traditional amusement park experience.  
320 The report further asserted that ‘in demographic and cultural terms, Oman offers two important targets, the indigenous Muslim population and large expatriate communities’ (Sweeney 2002: 18).  
321 Din (1989: 547) wrote: ‘It is suggested that considerations for alternative or complementary approaches to tourism development which are presently neglected, may help to provide a wide range of product to make Muslim destinations even more attractive’.
9.2.5. Community PIN

The term local community here means those people who live in the vicinity of a particular archaeological landscape and its surroundings and who are directly affecting and affected by PIN provision, physically and psychologically. As a supportive for community tourism, ICPI encourages community-led interpretation (Price 2006) which includes ‘groups of individuals with varying degree of organisation and with a shared agenda’. Community PIN seeks to balance and fit ICIP with the needs and aspiration of the locals in a way that is acceptable to them, helps them to rediscover the heritage in their area, sustains their economies and is not damaging their culture, traditions, daily lifestyle and convenience. Herein, PIN should be responsive and contribute to the locals’ needs, empower them to become actors rather than part of the interpretive product; an active member in PIN provision as planners, interpreters, managers, investors and visitors (see Section 3.8.2). Therefore, BX1 mentioned that local communities ‘should always be the first addressees’.

The findings in chapters five, six and seven are very supportive for the inclusion of local communities in any leadership and partnership board and ICIP as one agent to accomplish sustainable PIN. Thus, it is expected that the audit phase defines the various characteristics of the involved local communities and their contexts, e.g. demographic and psychographic trends, the current socio-economy, local handicrafts, education level and training qualifications. The following discussion in this part will describe the expected impact of ICPI approach on the local communities in respect to SCC and SSC.

322 For example, the local community characters of those who live in Bausher urban area differ from those who live in the rural Bat area. It is expected that Bausher residents are less influenced by the social traditions and dedications than those who live in Bat.
9.2.5.1. Communities and their socio-cultural context

As mentioned in Chapter Seven, the Omani society still observe its inherited traditions, especially in the rural areas where people still live in the vicinity of archaeological areas. Therefore, ICPI does consider their acceptance and interest in developing their local area to be a part of a particular interpretive theme and respect their social, spiritual and symbolic spaces that assume meanings and significance as it is the case with the tombs in Shir and Dhofar region\footnote{Zuefle (1997: 34-35) assured the importance of such matter ‘to avoid alienating program, participants and constituent communities by failing to recognize potentially important differences between values and belief system of the community’s members’}. Also, the scientific-led interpretations in archaeology related to such topics as prehistoric eras and the evolution theory needs to be communicated properly through education system, public archaeology, community archaeology and the local media as expressed by many respondents (e.g. AM10, AM14, AM19, AM21, AM32, AM35, AS6, AS11, AS13). For instance, welcoming the locals and interact with them has approved a good results at such sites as Ras al-Jinz (AM33) and Qalhat (AM35) where excavations become ‘socially engaged’ rather than being scientifically detached practices (Tilley 1989: 280)\footnote{Some respondents (e.g. AS3, AS4, AM33, BX3) suggested local site museums to carry on such missions as visitor management and public outreaching programs.}.

A further imperative element in regard to this part is the documentation and utilisation when possible of intangible heritage, especially if it is related to the interpreted AH. For instance, the folk stories for AH at Shir and Wubar Shisur represent ethnographic values and a possible source to enrich the interpretive themes and make it more enjoyable (BX5, BX10)\footnote{In this term, Teri (2006: 80) mentioned that ‘public folklorists have a potentially important contribution to make to the interpretive conversation’}. Also, the inclusion of living heritage in themeing PIN\footnote{Some respondents (e.g. AS3, AS4, AM33, BX3) suggested local site museums to carry on such missions as visitor management and public outreaching programs.}
would provide the opportunity to survive and make the intangible tangible to visitors. In addition, this might increase the sense of ownership and pride among Omani visitors, especially the locals (AM31), who might realize that part of their heritage is somehow connected to the sites within their area (see Section 3.8.2). In this sense, PIN helps in giving 'the people of Oman a deep insight for the long traditions of their live styles' (BX4). All these aspect should be discussed by all stakeholders in the *Leadership and Partnership Board* during the planning of ICIP as one of the main goals for ICPI is the accomplishment of sustainable PIN as much as possible.

Also, to develop an interpretive program does not mean the removal of the inhabitants from the site or the destruction of more lived-in structures as in Bahla. In fact, this can be attractive as ‘historical integration with present-day life that adds to the interest and the value of the site’ (Aslan 2005: 13). Daher (2006: 29) included that ‘tourists seek contact with living communities next to ancient sites all over the Middle East where local communities have lived in between such ancient ruins or next to them for ages’. Therefore, tourism officials, public and private, ‘stressed the importance of culture in promoting Oman as a tourist destination’ (al-Masroori 2006: 328). In this term, BX3 suggested the following:

*Some currently inhabited oasis towns are already visited by tourists, but only to see their forts and suqs. A proper oasis trail* (selectively including all sorts of places like Izki, Nizwa, Tanuf, Misfah, Bahla, Ibri and the Sharqiya towns) *should be a possibility, with groups being led through the oases to visit traditional bayts [houses], look at carved*

326 According to Little (2004), thematic framework is a useful conceptual tool to make tangible-intangible links.
doorways, sample dates and so on. Of course, this would have to be set up in collaboration with the local communities and their leaders.

9.2.5.2. Community as a stakeholder

In order to establish an active role of community in PIN, there is a requirement for ‘a sound working relationship’ (Grimwade and Carter 2000: 37) to be set up and enforced by the Leadership and Partnership Board. Here, instead of exploiting the locals as cheap labour in seasonal jobs, they insistently need to be enrolled and empowered in PIN as main partners. Also, the locals can work collaboratively with the government and try to develop their interpretive planning based on community-based research rather than waiting for the unclear governmental aid.

The sense of ownership amongst communities might be best encouraged through the development of dispersed interpretive mechanisms located within the communities themselves rather than in a centralised interpretive facility that could be isolated from these communities (Stewart et al. 2001). This means that PIN of AH ‘should contribute to the local economy’ (BX3) which becomes more important for some sites being central to their surrounding communities as in Bahla, al-Balid Park, Bausher and Qalhat. In return, this might give multi-functions for AH in locals’ life and becomes part of its biosphere and future empowerment (ICOMOS 2006b). This can be achieved by selling local handicraft products related to the thematic storylines about a particular AH327. In this sense, PIN for AH is important in sustaining communities (Keen 1999) as one basic reason for tourists to travel is to experience the way of life and product of a particular community (Richard and Hall 2000). Also, the locals may represent an

327 This can be done in cooperation with the Public Authority for Crafts Industries where there are plans to establish national centres, studies, preservation plans and training and marketing programs to develop crafts industries in Oman (Ministry of National Economy 2007: Table 53).
important market, especially in the peripheral areas and during the off-season periods; thus, seeking the community’s advice in designing various interpretive programs for local families and school parties would be worthwhile (AM17). Herein, some local archaeological sites can be utilized for educational and recreational purposes. For instance, AS5 suggested planning for local festivals at Bat and Qalhat.

The deformed physiographic landscape and the lack of cohesion in developing some of the historic forts and castles have resulted from the lack of local communities’ involvement in SSC and the absence of active public archaeology. Therefore, as most of AH in Oman is located in the rural areas, and because of the lack of trained human and financial resources, it has become critical not to underestimate the role of local people in site management and sustainable archaetourism (AS2, AS6, AS9, AS12, BX3). For instance, local guides can become an interpreter and a site guard as well. AU6 emphasized that ‘every region must have its own tourist guides; this will give more accountability and stewardship to particular people to be in charge of a specific area [and] will benefit the locals from tourism development’. These guides can become *ecotour guides* (Black *et al.* 2001) who work as cultural mediators between their community and visitors, assist in management, and provide education. This is beside the role of local guides in providing mindful interpretive experience as described in Section 9.2.3.

**9.2.6. Phased PIN**

As repeatedly said in this research, Oman is a developing touristic destination. As a new phenomenon, tourism in Oman ‘requires careful planning from the planning authorities
to avoid any negative consequences that may surface in different tourism development stages’ (al-Masroori 2006: 329). As Chapter Six confirmed the importance of linking archaeotourism to other development plans in the country, therefore, it is expected that ICIP could become a phased interpretive plan rather than one-off instant project, especially in the middle of a bureaucratic environment (AM13, AS9). Herein, as suggested by Brochu (2003: 142) ‘the action plan should suggest appropriate phasing to accomplish implementation in logical steps’ which ought to be determined by the Leadership and Partnership Board.

As interpretive programs represent one chain among other travelling chains, ICPI considers the national general strategy for the development of the tourism industry in the country. This is important to ensure PIN practicality and sustainability as it ‘must be seen to be a part of overall sustainable management policy’ (Stewart et al. 2001: 353). Therefore, as it is the case with any integrative approach (European Commission 2000a, 2000b, 2000c), the implementation and application of ICIP could be a long-term commitment that will need considerable amount of time, effort, fund and workforce plans.

As the history of PIN shows, the interest in heritage PIN as a profession could increase as the interest in heritage tourism increases in Oman which is a critical requirement for the competitiveness and sustainability of any destination (see Section 3.8)\(^\text{328}\). This is with the fact that heritage resources represent one if not the most important competitive

\(^{328}\) The development of tourism planning and archaeological resources management does not necessary mean the improvement of heritage PIN provision and profession in Oman. This has been noticed in Wales, United Kingdom as discussed by some commentators (Jenkins 1992, Turley 1998, Elis-Gruffydd 2002, Humphries 2006).
elements in the tourism industry in Oman. In this context, BX8 encourages the current stewardship to ‘create a long-term projects, programs and policies that aim at encouraging the importance of archaeological sites and motivating people to participate in this part by involving them in different processes regarding the archaeology in the country’.

Phasing any interpretive plan, as confirmed by ICPI in the first phase, has to be done in congruent with the data gathered from both the micro-context and macro-context of the interpreted sites. In respect to the micro-context, the current status of development and local ongoing projects, as well as the short-term plans for the context should be measured and audited. For instance, Bausher area, Bahla Oasis and al-Balid Park are located in active areas where reasonable level of public services and infrastructure are available. Visitors here can take an advantage of having more recreational and leisure activities\textsuperscript{329}.

As for the macro-context, it refers to the long-term tourism development plans at national, regional or local level for a particular area. It also means the availability and capability of national technical and financial support (public and private) to implement the intended PIN at a particular area. To exemplify, at Ras al-Jinz, there are ongoing governmental projects to develop a scientific centre and visitors’ camping facilities. This is in addition to the long-term approved master development plan for Ras al-Jinz and Ras al-Hadd (Ministry of Tourism 2004b). Such future plans, which have been proposed and supported by MOT, the LNG Oman, and other private and public bodies,

\textsuperscript{329} In contrast to this positive influence, the disadvantage as discussed in Chapter Five is that the archaeological sites are more threaten and exposed to destruction due to the modernization processes.
play as external motivations to develop the archaeological sites in the area. Regardless of their significance and direct or indirect effect in developing the centre, here, it is the macro-context that helps in providing a better opportunity for Ras al-Jinz to be interpreted.

In another word, although Bat and Shisur Wubar are of a national and universal significance; yet, the research findings show that there are no current tourism development plans in the practical sense. This confirmed that PIN provision is partially driven by economic objectives. It should be remembered that as Oman is a developing country, there are a set-up level of priorities in planning and development process built on such circumstances as the Five-Year Development Plans (Ministry of Information 2004), the vision for Oman’s Economy, Oman 2020 (Ministry of National Economy 2001) and Oman’s Vision for Tourism (Parsons International Limited 2002). Also, it is important to establish a vision of what the future of the tourism industry in the region and where the available markets are (Sweeney 2002).

A very important point to be considered at both sites Bausher and Ras al-Jinz is that the development of PC is not enough. Therefore, the phased PIN here means also the serious consideration of understanding the needs of SCC for these sites gradually and systematically. If not, as a critical driving factor, this context can draw back PIN and consequently the heritage tourism in at large\textsuperscript{330}.

\textsuperscript{330} For instance, the local communities at Ras al-Jinz and Ras al-Hadd areas are not practically involved in the planning, development and implementation processes (AM23). This indicates unsustainable condition for any future PIN. In visiting Ras al-Hadd Hotel which is located nearby the residential area of the locals, it appeared that the hotel serves alcoholic for its guests. Similar to this, and as field visits to Bahla show, the local community still believe that their involvement in tourism in general and in
Also, it should be born in mind, and due to SCC and SSC, the integration of the locals in interpretive plans and their recruitment might take a long-time before they can effectively play a major role and be self-dependents. This is one main challenge facing the current SSC where compelling the locals to be part of PIN might be an issue in its own right, specifically where there is no awareness and proficiency. Also, dealing with SCC can not be done randomly and rapidly. This explains why it is important to include mindful members from the local community in the Leadership and Partnership Board. By doing this, the socio-cultural effects could be reduced and the adjustment to ICIP is not quickened.

Although some may presume that phased PIN in ICPI might hinder the implementation of ICIP, however, a thoughtful look will see it as a supportive practical agent and an opportunity to accomplish sustainable tourism rather than importing ‘quick fix’ ready-made approaches as this was never a serious consideration of the Omani government in the general development framework for the common good (Ministry of Information 2006). For instance, Mershen (2006) mentioned that the quickened large-scale investments through foreign investors in Oman could cause considerable negative impacts in community-based tourism and touristic resources as well.

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331 This becomes more challenging as the Human Development Report (Ministry of National Economy 2003a: 36) included: 'The actual difference between developed and developing countries lies in acquisition of knowledge...A difference made by the availability of information, statistics, and good database'.

332 There is a group of people from the locals and the general public who are really concerned about archaeology and enthusiastic to develop archaeotourism (AU4, BX1). This group can become the intermediaries between the stewardship and their communities.
Also, phased PIN could be a cost-effective approach where interpretive themes are established upon existing developed attractions (e.g. the Turtle Sanctuary at Ras al-Jinz, al-Balid Park, Sohar Fort Museum). These attractions can become as hubs to various clusters of sites (see Section 8.4.2.2). Moreover, there are many developing projects all over Oman, especially in the tourism sector, which encourages phased PIN (Ministry of Information 2007).

Furthermore, there are some promising projects that can work as incentives to consider ICPI approach. For example, with the grant from the Ambassador’s Fund for Cultural Preservation, U.S.A, the Historical Association of Oman (HAO) is able to conduct a multi-purposes survey of Bausher area that covers its various heritage components, including the archaeological heritage (US ambassador 2005: 1)\textsuperscript{333}. Another important fact, and similar to the regional administrative department, established by MOT, there is a growing awareness about the importance of creating such departments by MOHC (AM13), especially it is reported that there is about one million Omani Rial to establish cultural centres in different regions of Oman during the Seventh Five-Year Plan, 2006-2010 (Ministry of National Economy 2007: Table 23).

The establishment of these centres would go well with ICPI approach to facilitate and increase the stewardship at regional level and provide more opportunity to develop PIN. This partial decentralization or regional devolution can facilitate and ensure the long-term commitment and dynamic monitoring in partnership with involved private and...
public sectors, as well as with the locals in order to develop community PIN, especially in the less developed areas.

9.3. SUMMARY

This chapter outlined the main characteristics and benefits of applying ICPI approach to accomplish quality PIN of AH and consequently archaeotourism, as well as the tourism industry in general. This has been described in relation to the Omani context in particular. Virtually, it appeared from the discussion that all of the characteristics are interdependent and complement one another.

The discussion illustrates that all these characteristics go side by side with the governmental long-term vision for the tourism sector in Oman, as well as with AH stewardship. Also, they help in accomplishing the constructivist, constructionist, interpretive and hermeneutic nature of ICPI by emphasizing the significance of thematic PIN and community PIN for instance.

Although the complicated nature of such integrative approaches as ICPI is undeniable, however, such complexity is part of its applicability and a reflection for the practical fact in which AH and its PIN are originally situated; it should be understood that ‘good interpretation doesn’t come cheap’ (Binks 1986: 45). This refers to the importance of applying dynamic approach where there is continuous processing for new inputs within the context in which PIN is situated. Considering the interlinked various factors as one system in PIN could be more effective, capable and successful to communicate,
strengthen, benefit and enliven archaeological sites and their cultural landscape without compromising their integrity.

ICPI should not be seen as a route to instant success or claimed to be a comprehensive solution for every single problems inhibiting PIN of AH in Oman. Yet, ICPI is willing to be part of the solution if not the solution itself. In the following chapter, some recommendations are provided to assist in the development of ICPI plans for AH and consequently archaeotourism in Oman.
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CHAPTER TEN
SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

10.1. INTRODUCTION

It is intended in this chapter to provide a brief summary of the main aims and objectives of this thesis. Also, it describes the major research findings and contributions in respect to PIN of AH in particular and heritage PIN in general. As well, this chapter posts some guiding recommendations that could help in the implementation of ICPI in Oman. Finally, this chapter will refer to the limitations of this thesis and point out some research gaps and opportunities in regard to the subject matter of this research.

10.2. SUMMARY

In an attempt to heighten the existing quality of PIN for AH at one of the developing growing touristic destinations, Oman, this study has called for the serious and practical reconsideration of the current interpretive practices and approaches. The importance of this comes from the fact that Oman’s heritage resources, including archaeological sites, have been seen as key elements to develop a competitive destination in the region. So, it is expected that as heritage tourism in Oman is growing, the interest in heritage PIN should increase as well since PIN has the ability to improve the quality of travelling experience and consequently the competitiveness of the tourism industry in Oman.

However, the current role of PIN as a driving factor in archacotourism is unrealized or overlooked by the tourism stewardship in Oman which is a paradoxical status. This is because while AH represents one of the major competitive-touristic elements and one of the first motivations for visitors and tourists to travel around the country, yet, its
development via interpretive infrastructure is the last to be considered. It is a paradox between theories and the practical fact and between the difficulty of getting funding for PIN provision and of the increasing stated concern about heritage resources in Oman by the public and private institutions. To understand in depth the various reasons behind this, four main objectives were set up which are: 1) reviewing the related literature; 2) auditing and analyzing the main issues; 3) proposing an alternative interpretive model; and 4) posting directive recommendations and pointing out some future research opportunities based on the available literature and the research findings (Figure 10.1).

| 1 | Literature Review | conceptual definitions for archaeotourism & PIN, historical background, public archaeology, PIN values, controversial issues in PIN, on-site and off-site experience, PIN & Sustainability |
| 2 | Auditing and Analyzing | Sampling | Data Collection | Data Analysis | Results |
| | | Criterion | - Interviews | - coding | - PC |
| | | Opportunistic | - expert survey | - analysis | - SSC |
| | | | - field notes, | - IEL, FNIL, DAL | - SCC |
| | | | - documents & archival files |
| 3 | Approach Proposal | Integrated Context Public Interpretation | (quality, constructivist, dynamic & creativity, mindful experience, community-based, thematic, phased). |
| 4 | Recommendations | professionalism in PIN | registration and research management |
| | | privatization of PIN | international cooperation |
| | | legislation & ethics | specialized tourism development |
| | | funding PIN | public awareness of AH |

Figure 10.1: A summary for the research main steps

To accomplish the first objective the researcher started by reviewing the theoretical and practical research in respect to PIN of AH in particular, in an attempt to cover most studies related to the research problem. The literature focused on defining the concept of PIN and archaeotourism, describing the main values of PIN for heritage resources in
general, discussing the major controversial issues in AH interpretation for public and
shedding light on problems facing PIN in regard to planning, management and
evaluating aspects. A new definition was proposed for archaeotourism and a framework
was described for the concept of PIN. This objective worked as the first directive base
for the structure and discussion in this thesis (Chapter Three).

To achieve the second objective, which represents the second directive base, the
researcher conducted intensive fieldwork in Oman through various types of interviews,
expert surveys and the review of archival and documentary resources, especially those
relating to the criterion sites (Chapter Four). This is in order to audit the phenomenon in
discussion more comprehensively and within its micro and macro context which are
congruent with hermeneutic perspectives. Various perspectives were integrated where
different respondents had the opportunity to share their interpretive comments and
analysis in relative to PIN of AH in Oman.

Based on the primary resources, and guided by the related literature, three main
interconnected influential factors have been identified, namely PC, SSC and SCC (see
chapters five, six and seven). Under each one of these factors there are numerous major
issues which were repeatedly presented and supported by the findings. Also, the
findings show the strong interrelationship among these factors at both the micro-context
and the macro-context of a particular archaeological landscape.

Based on Objective One and Objective Two, and supported by the current trends in
cultural heritage tourism and PIN, a new approach for PIN of AH in Oman was
proposed to achieve the third objective set up for this research (Chapter Eight). As the current status in PIN has resulted from the total collective impact of the interlinked factors associated within the three contexts, equally, the study strongly supported the application of a holistic integrative approach, ICPI, to address these factors comprehensively and complementary as possible; an approach that is guided by constructivist/constructionist viewpoints to develop PIN for AH in Oman. Again and again, ICPI should not be seen as a route to instant success; however, it endeavours to help in:

- building up more awareness and support for archaeotourism in Oman amongst the general public and across all involved governmental and private organizations;
- making AH relevant to the public life via PIN by giving it a dynamic practical function, e.g. socio-economic, recreational;
- taking advantage of the various heritage resources surrounding a particular archaeological landscape without compromising their integrity;
- providing an effective dynamic sustainable management approach for AH and other heritage resources;
- appreciating and strengthen the shared meanings and various perspectives proposed by the different stakeholders of a particular interpretive project to accomplish consensual planning;
- empowering community PIN and consider the context in which PIN is situated;
- presenting a ‘whole context’ and considering ‘the whole person’ in heritage PIN in general;
improving the image and perception of the heritage tourism generally and archaeotourism specifically in Oman by providing a positive total experience for tourists, encouraging repeat visits and spreading a positive word of mouth amongst other potential visitors;

- heightening the importance of using constructivist approach in communicating AH to the general public through on-site and off-site PIN;
- activating the role of PIN as a profession in academic and practical sense in Oman; and
- designing a phased interpretive system that goes well with the current development plans for the different sectors in Oman, including tourism.

The achievement of these objectives and others can be strengthened by considering the fourth objective of this research which is mainly focused on posting a directive of practical recommendations (Section 10.3) and suggesting further research opportunities in particular areas (Section 10.5).

10.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

Guided by the research findings, and published literature, here are some main recommendations which mainly are meant to present some tips for the implementation of ICPI approach and address the issues in the three contexts collectively to strengthen accessibility, validity, comprehensibility, authenticity, sustainability and vitality of PIN of AH in Oman.
10.3.1. Professionalism in Heritage PIN

Drawing on the findings that PIN as a profession has not been developed in Oman yet, while concurrently the interest in the heritage tourism in general is increasing as one source for economic diversification, it is recommended that the Omani government develops PIN as a profession in academic and practical sense in cooperation with national and international institutions. Three important steps are required to be considered which are:

10.3.1.1. Heritage PIN Centre

It is strongly recommended that a national centre or association for PIN to be founded, managed and advised by a joint committee represents all those public and private bodies which are expected to relate to heritage PIN in Oman. The centre could be under the auspices of one or more governmental bodies such as MHC and MOT. In addition to these two ministries, it would be important to include other governmental institutes such as the Ministry of Information, the Ministry of Education, Public Authority for Crafts Industries, Ministry of Regional Municipalities, Environment and Water Resources and the Historical Association of Oman. Besides, the public and private academic and training institutions, such as Sultan Qaboos University and Oman Tourism College, should be involved as well since they would have an important role in designing quality training programs and in-country workshops in PIN. The centre should be committed to:

- promote quality interpretive practices and develop PIN for all types of heritage resources in congruent with the Omani context by fostering enthusiasm, specifically amongst policymakers and particular groups such as tour operators
and investors in heritage tourism. This could help in securing some financial resources and technical supports;

- monitor the quality of interpretive plans and training programs, and their fulfilment for advising on the set up national legislation and the establishment of ethics relative to PIN, e.g. sustainability, community involvement;

- fund and encourage scientific research and publications in PIN and keep up-to-date information on education and training resources;

- help and play a major role in designing specific interpretive programs, either on-site or off-site, and training workshops to recruit some of the local communities in interpreting heritage sites as needed. For instance, by advising and assisting those archaeological excavations managers on how to welcome and involve those visitors who are interested in archaeological digging and how to raise the local awareness and participation as one way to strengthen community archaeology and PIN;

- give the opportunity for the interested and committed volunteers willing to participate in PIN in a particular project or lead guided tours, especially the locals;

- work as a coordinating body where professionals and interested volunteers from various disciplines could meet and exchange perspectives about interpretive programs and services. For instance, the findings show that experts from the Ministry of Agriculture are needed to help in interpreting the frankincense sites;

- assist the established regional departments by MOT for producing regional interpretive plans to improve the competitiveness and quality of heritage tourism in Oman; and
establish and suggest a national action plan for heritage PIN in congruent with
national development strategies in different sectors where a priority is given for
those heritage resources which are located in touristic active areas and World
Heritage Sites334.

10.3.1.2. Tour Guidance Training Programs in PIN

Having the fact that tour guidance is an important people-based PIN, and that there is a
lack of trained Omani tour guides in general, it is strongly recommended that in-country
theoretical and practical training programs to be developed335. Meetings amongst
various national governmental and private training institutions in Oman need to be
organized periodically in order to:

> develop cooperative effort in designing related courses in PIN. For instance,
MOT and MOHC need to cooperate with Sultan Qaboos University and Oman
Tourism College to plan interdisciplinary courses relative to PIN such as tour
guidance. As it is recognized that in-service and on the job training is an
essential component of any training program (Binks 1986), therefore, travel
agencies and tour operators should be encouraged to provide such opportunities;

> design some specialized oriented courses in PIN such as tour guidance at
archaeological sites. These courses can be incorporated into already existed
programs within these institutions. For example, it is suggested that both the
Department of Archaeology and the Department of History at Sultan Qaboos
University design joint intensive courses in archaeology and ethnography

334 For instance, AM6 mentioned that Muscat-Ibri road which leads to al-Dakhliyah region is a very
active touristic line which takes visitors close to many well-known cultural and natural sites in Fanja,
Birkat al-Mawz, Nizwa, al-Hamra, Bahla, Jibrin and Ibri.

335 One of the main principles that mentioned by Weiler and Ham (2002: 55) to develop tour guidance in
developing countries is that 'the initiative for training should come from the host country and ownership
should remain with the host country'.
suitable for those working in heritage tourism and delivered in a way that supports and enhances their skills rather than simply as part of more academic degree programs:

- train and prepare female tour guides in Oman where for socio-cultural reasons some tourists, especially those with families, prefer female tour guides;
- offer foreign language courses specially designed for interpretive services as there is an increasing need for such languages as English, German, French and Japanese;
- prevent duplication of courses within a particular area and emphasize diversity and complementary amongst institutions in training PIN; and
- increase the public awareness of the importance of tour guidance as a profession and support this by forming in-detail job description and ethics relative to tour guidance in Oman.

10.3.1.3. Archaeology as a Profession

Archaeological research and excavations represent the main sources for primary and public interpretation. The limited number of qualified Omani experts and technical support in archaeology and its affiliated sciences is a critical problems facing PIN of AH. Therefore, MOHC in cooperation with Sultan Qaboos University and other

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336 Also, many respondents have expressed the importance of using re-enactment or performance-led programs in interpreting the past, especially for the average tourists and school students (AM7, AM12, AS4). Here, the Department of Theatre at Sultan Qaboos University could help in improving personal interpretation by providing courses in re-enactment.

337 Al-Hotta Cave has been one good example for the employment of on-site female tour guides from the same area (see Ministry of Tourism 2006: http://www.alhottacave.com/).
involved academic and administrative institutions should establish theoretical and practical training programs in archaeology\textsuperscript{338}.

Also, the formation of a national team for archaeological works is an interesting idea where its membership is opened to all those interested in archaeology, both specialists and volunteer\textsuperscript{339}. Moreover, as there is no single specialized archaeologist at the Directorate General of Heritage and Culture in Dhofar, MOHC should expand and support a close cooperation with OCA where a group of archaeologists is available. Besides, the programs should include those administrators in the governmental and private institutions relative to cultural resource management.

### 10.3.2. National Registry and Research Management

According to the findings, one of the obstacles facing the primary and public interpretation for AH is the lack of national registrar and effective research management which is partially responsible for keeping the official records of AH inaccessible and unmanageable. Any audit stage in ICPI would have to refer to the official registry and research department. Also, this is vital to set up a national interpretive plan with priorities. Moreover, the registry would assist the private sector in conducting initial feasible studies in regard to PIN of AH for projects with different goals.

For its importance in the application of ICPI, as well as for the development of quality PIN as a profession, it is recommended to upgrade the current research and

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\textsuperscript{338} Lately, this appears to be quite promising as there is increasing joint projects between Sultan Qaboos University and MOHC. Though, the lacuna between academic and administrative institutions relative to archaeology needs to be more bridged financially and scientifically.

\textsuperscript{339} Moore (2006: 17) referred to 'the recreation archaeology' which includes volunteer programs, paid participant programs which can be developed at local levels at such sites as Ras al-Jinz and Bat.
documentation department at MOHC to become a functional and more active national registry and multi-disciplinary research unit in co-operation with other governmental institutions working in the same field. This should be made statutory with more supportive funding from the government to ensure work quality and validity. The department should aim at:

- training some Omani experts appropriate for the particular needs of the registration and research work, carrying out periodic systematic archaeological surveys, documentation and initial analysis for AH in the country;
- adopting more holistic and integrative approaches in documenting archaeological sites from being site-focused to landscape-based strategy where other affiliated heritage resources are considered\(^{340}\). This is equally important for both research-oriented or rescue excavations\(^{341}\);
- preparing a list of archaeological sites in each region, including both those which have been excavated and those identified during survey. This is a matter of some urgency, once completed the list would have to be periodically updated to include new discoveries. A comprehensive list of that kind would certainly be a useful research tool for archaeologist and AH management;
- reconsidering archaeological research priorities by conducting and improving oriented analytical research and primary interpretations to explore the historical gaps in some periods and the lack of information and connectivity about

\(^{340}\) In the UK, Historical Landscape Characterization (HLC) has been applied to help identify gaps in knowledge and target priority areas for further survey and research. HLC shows patterns and connections within the landscape, including the variety of sites and their relationship with other landscape features in the past and present. This advised land management issues and helped archaeologists to communicate the relevance of the history in the landscape to modern strategies (see Macinnes 2004).

\(^{341}\) According to Tilley (1989: 277), 'it is pointless to rescue the trace of the past at any site in isolation'.

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particular sites (e.g. Bat, Arja, Qalhat) or periods (e.g. Magan culture, Islamic archaeology);

- co-operating with national and international academic institutions in doing the documentation and in-depth multidisciplinary research, especially with those institutes which MOHC has joint projects with such as Sultan Qaboos University, the Italian-French expedition (Ras al-Jinz), the American expedition (al-Balid) and the German expedition (Bat);

- designing functional and known practical techniques to produce easy-accessed system for processing and maintaining the collected data in a comprehensive flexible archive. For instance, utilizing GIS techniques can provide more accessibility for data to all stakeholders. Therefore, AH stewardship should liaise with those institutions that intensively use this technique in Oman such as the National Survey Authority, the Ministry of Regional Municipalities and Environment and Sultan Qaboos University;

- producing high quality aerial images, pictures, maps and other explanatory illustrations (manual and electronic) to benefit future research and PIN\textsuperscript{343}. For instance, designing such interpretive media as Archeoguide system (see Section 3.8.3) would become easier in case there are digitized data, not to mention that this will help in managing such problems as the lack of Omani experts and financial resources; and

\textsuperscript{342} For instance, Mohammed al-Belushi from the Department of Archaeology at Sultan Qaboos University has proposed database system called ‘The National Archaeological Database of Oman’, NADO, which can be used by MOHC to serve conservation, management and research needs (al-Belushi 2005).

\textsuperscript{343} A good example to show the importance of developing the national registry is the online National Monuments Record of Wales (NMRW)\textsuperscript{343} and the COFLEIN which is developed and published by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (2007).
making the data and research findings accessible to the academic institutions, scholars, and for the interested members of the public depending on their specific needs. This should be a statutory obligation, yet data should be used responsibly. Policy should be formed for the re-use of the accessed data to keep copyright and prevent any damages to AH, especially in the remote areas. This can be more facilitated via online dissemination where the data becomes easier and faster to be used and can save time, effort and money for both users and manager.

Another aspect in regard to this recommendation is that as opposed to expert-based research, community-based research should be encouraged where research ‘has to be done in collaboration with members of a community rather than entirely by an outside expert’ (Root 2007: 565). Herein, the right to research is more democratized where research is not manipulated by knowledge-based institutions (Appadurai 2006). This would reflect the growing interest in public participation in the development of the tourism industry in general and heritage tourism in particular. Also, because of the cost of conducting professional research, and in cooperation with some experts, the community can develop their own methods for providing the necessary data to prepare local PIN; the written interpretation would respect and protect the community interest as a whole and it would become more accessible linguistically to the locals as will as other average visitors.

Community-based research are designed to evaluate community’s current programs or policies to increase the members’ ability to identify problems and develop plans to solve them and to make a case for a public policy favoured by members of the community (Root 2007).
10.3.3. The Privatization of PIN

Based on the findings, the involvement of the private sector in PIN is highly supported which does not mean a total control of PIN industry by limited individuals and groups to become manipulated and official-led and consequently the commercialization of heritage tourism. However, it means that as Oman is moving towards privatization of many sectors, including the tourism industry, the establishment of practical mechanisms and appropriate regulations that facilitate and organize the relationship between the private sector and heritage PIN is vital. For instance, various steps are needed to build quality awareness about PIN among the interested investors. Also, the inclusion of governmental representatives and members of the local communities should be a prerequisite for such investment and enterprises.

Private interpretive projects and services can help in overcoming financial resources and provide the opportunity for those who are interested to work in PIN, especially the locals. It should be remembered here that the application of integrative approaches to interpret large historical landscapes, such as Bat, Bausher and Qalhat or various groups of sites as the frankincense sites, will require the serious involvement of specialized private companies. This is important for the quality of PIN. That is to say, the national, international groups and individual/family enterprises that are willing to invest in heritage tourism should be wisely empowered and supported as part of improving community PIN without compromising heritage resources sustainability. Therefore, dynamic evaluation and monitoring by specialists is required.
10.3.4. Establishing International Co-operation and Coordination

As PIN has not been established as a profession in Oman yet, and as there is growing demands to develop heritage-based tourism in Oman, it is strongly recommended that the country seeks the advice from international organizations and establish close relationships with those countries with developed heritage PIN institutions.345

As it is the case with some archaeological sites in the Middle East, such as Mkies in Jordan and Luxor in Egypt (Daher 2006, Orbasli 2007, Shunnaq et al. 2008), the Omani government should work in cooperation with experts from UNESCO, ICOMOS and ICOM in order to properly develop the documentation and registration system, research, preservation and off-site and on-site PIN for AH, especially the World Heritage Sites.346

In addition to the internal funding options, the government could look for external sources from international grants and friends organizations. For example, according to the Operational Guidelines of the Convention of 1972, the Member nations can apply for long-term loans and, in special cases, for outright grants (World Heritage Centre 2005: VILE Summary Table).347 Also, as Oman is a member state of ICOMOS, it is entitled to seek assistance from the International Scientific Committee on Interpretation and Presentation (ICIP) in designing a basic guideline for PIN of cultural resources. Similarly, Oman could use those international charters and ethics developed by World Tourism Organization, e.g. Québec Declaration of Ecotourism (2002) and the Global

345 This comes from the fact that AH is 'the common heritage of all humanity [where] international cooperation is therefore essential in developing and maintaining standards in its management' (ICOMOS 1990: Article 9).

346 According to the Convention of 1972, Member Nations can request international assistance from the World Heritage Fund for studies, provision of experts, technicians, skilled labour, training of staff and specialists, and the supply of equipment for protection, conservation, rehabilitation, and interpretation of World Heritage Properties (World Heritage Centre 1972, 2005).

347 For further details see the Operational Guidelines (World Heritage Centre 2005) which were first prepared in 1977 by the World Heritage Committee and have been revised since then (James 1993: 84).

348 http://icip.icomos.org/ENG/home.html
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Code of Ethics for Tourism (1999), as guidelines for the development of heritage tourism through PIN. Similar to the international Silk Road Project$^{349}$, the development of interpretive international trails, such as the Frankincense Trail or Magan Route, will require the involvement of multilateral international agreements and the involvement of international organizations such as UNESCO and World Tourism Organization.

Due to the lack of Omani experts and institutions in PIN, MOHC and MOT should seek the technical and scientific support and advices from well-established international organizations such as National Association for Interpretation (NAI)$^{350}$, the Association for Heritage Interpretation (AHI)$^{351}$ and the Ename Centre for Public Archaeology and Heritage Presentation$^{352}$. In case there was an intention to establish PIN centre or association by the Omani government, these organizations could become good guiding sources to build up PIN as a profession in the country through information exchanges and joint workshops, programs and projects. Noteworthy to say, 'staying connected with professional associations is one of the most effective ways for interpreters to stay abreast of a changing world' (Merriman and Brochu 2006: 63).

10.3.5. National Legislation and Ethics for PIN

The findings show that there is a policy vacuum in regard to AH and its interpretation to the public. It is true that AH is protected by the law, however, the current regulations are mainly focused on management and have not been linked with development plans.

$^{349}$ In fact, Oman played a major role in the Silk Road as many research confirmed this (Kervran 1992, 2002, Severin 1992) which provides an opportunity to integrate some related archaeological landmarks, e.g. Sohar, Qalhat, Khor Rori, with the ready-established routes (World Tourism Organization 2006).
$^{350}$ http://www.interpnet.com/
$^{351}$ http://www.heritage-interpretation.org.uk/
$^{352}$ http://www.enamecenter.org/
They are old and insufficiently responsive to the complex needs of the plans. Therefore, they need to be reformed, amended and then enforced. This is in order to reach the desired quality management for PIN. In regard to this, there are two main things which are needed to be stressed, national legislation and ethics for professionals.

10.3.5.1. National Legislation

It is necessary to update and implement the current established national legislation which are directly influencing AH and its interpretation, such as NHPL 1980 and Tourism Law 2002, and the indirect ones such as those royal decrees related to natural resources preservation and environment protection (e.g. 114/2001, 6/2003, 27/2003). This is extremely important in Oman, especially that the current mentioned legislation and policies do not state clearly or give much credit to heritage PIN.

Also, the locals should be supported and included in the national vision for the development and management of heritage tourism in Oman. A critical point here is the value of protecting historical landscape integrity as a whole at such site as Bat and Bahla to show the chronological progress and cohesion of these landscapes and provide examples for the past influence in the present, e.g. vernacular architecture and aflaj.

10.3.5.2. Professional Ethics

In addition to the national legislation and policies, there is a need to create a more specific professional directive of ethics for heritage PIN in general to work as a guideline for all interpreters and interpretive plans. This directive should consider all those mentioned elements in chapters five, six, seven, eight and nine. The related
international conventions, charters, agreements, ethics and codes can work as sources for the development of such directive. To ensure its practicality and comprehensibility, this directive needs to be set up, upgraded, enforced, monitored and evaluated by a joint committee of experts from various public and private institutions or by the suggested centre in Section 10.3.1.1.\textsuperscript{353}

10.3.6. Archaeotourism as Special Interest Tourism

It has been mentioned in chapters six and nine that Oman has been planning to develop different types of specialized tourism, including archaeotourism. Also, the research findings suggested the integration of archaeotourism with other types of tourism such as adventure tourism and rural tourism where most AH in Oman is spread over the peripheral areas which have their own uniqueness as adventure place. That is to say the interest in archaeotourism should be practically translated into active interpretive practices, so that various benefits can be accomplished. For instance, demographic erosion has already led to the partial or complete desertification of hundreds of villages in Oman. Herein, integrative interpretive plans can work as one pivotal activity to achieve the socio-economic revitalization of the rundown and less advanced regions\textsuperscript{354}.

It is suggested here that archaeological landscapes can be incorporated into different touristic itineraries for niche tourists such as geo-tourism, e.g. Shir and Qalhat, desert

\textsuperscript{353} Some of the most important elements which can be included in the directive are: holistic interpretation; integration planning; local community participation; specialization and training; systematic documentation and registration; oriented research; marketing strategy; public awareness; publications and media; visitor management; sustainability; authenticity; security; accessibility; sensuous experience and education; and dynamic evaluation.

\textsuperscript{354} This has been confirmed by Greffe (1994), Lane (1994) and Orams (1995) where they suggested that rural tourism in particular 1) enables other possibilities for rural activities to be defined, 2) makes it possible to create outlets for traditional products, e.g. handicraft product, and 3) makes it possible to create new sources of income, e.g. small and medium enterprises.
tourism, e.g. Shisur Wubar, eco-tourism, e.g. Ras al-Jinz, ethnic-tourism\textsuperscript{355}, e.g. Shenah, agricultural tourism, e.g. Bat and Bahla, and mining tourism, e.g. Arja, and al-Maysar.
This is important at such regions as Dhofar in the south, where during \textit{al-Khareef} season archaeotourism can become one alternative for the increasing number of tourists (Ministry of Information 2007), especially the World Heritage Sites relevant to the frankincense trade.

Currently, MOT has been working in some projects to develop these niche tourisms such as trekking trails in the Eastern Haja, Western Hajar and Capital Area, the Turtle Reserve in Ras al-Jinz and al-Hotta Cave in al-Hamra. Yet, the specialized tour operators in Oman still underdeveloped where, for instance, there is one specialized company in Geotourism, Shuram L.L.C (Jacelyn Cabaltera: personal communication: 10/January/2007).

Since the subject matter of this research is mainly PIN and archaeotourism, it is recommended that both MOHC and MOT in cooperation with those related public and private institutions to:

$\triangleright$ promote the value of designing integrative itineraries for niche markets by suggesting examples of thematic interpretive programs where AH is mainly included;

$\triangleright$ integrate and strengthen joint efforts of those interested travel agencies and operators in promoting and operating archaeotourism. For instance, the operators should be advised by site managers regarding the content and delivery of a

\textsuperscript{355} According to Pitchford (1995: 36), ethnic-tourism could be identified as 'a group and its distinctive culture are the main attraction'.

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particular interpretive programs in order to convey the desired message by the managers and accomplish long-term conservation objectives\textsuperscript{356};

- encourage the local SMEs or micro-enterprises that are willing to develop archaeotourism in a particular area throughout interpretive services, e.g. specialized guides. Encouragement comes from incentives such as grants, technical support and flexibility of procedures;
- co-operate with international agencies that are specialized in promoting and operating archaeotourism in particular, or cultural heritage in general;
- prepare some specialized design-based interpretive media and publications for the specialized tourists, and others for the average tourists; the data should be periodically evaluated and updated;
- develop the required interpretive infrastructure and touristic superstructure; and
- design a special oriented training programs and workshops in interpreting AH and sponsor various activities and programs that are related to archaeotourism.

\textbf{10.3.7. Museums and PIN}

In regard to museums, there are two main aspects which are the establishment of a national museum for AH and open-air museums (or archaeological parks) in Oman.

\textbf{10.3.7.1. The National Museum for AH}

The establishment of a national museum for AH in Oman to ‘be the focal point of the entire network of archaeological sites and site museums’ (BX3) has been supported by a major number of respondents (see Section 6.2.6.1). The museum needs to be well-

\textsuperscript{356} See Armstrong and Weiler’s (2003) research.
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established and designed with high quality standards where it can handle and provide
different missions for both the average visitors and specialists. In regard to PIN, some of
the major roles that the museum can play are:

➢ Some of its sub-departments could play complementary roles in documentation
and research development in regard to AH and its interpretation.

➢ It attracts the public interest to AH with various thematic interpretive activities
where quality and audience variety are considered and expected.

➢ Special oriented edutainment and learning programs should be provided for
some groups such as school parties, families and specialized tourists.

➢ Due to climatic considerations during the summer in Oman where it becomes
difficult for many people to visit archaeological sites, the museum could be one
alternative venue for the public to learn about AH.

➢ In cooperation with governmental and private institutions, promotional materials
and activities for archaeotourism should be considered through exhibitions,
brochures, leaflets, booklets, magazines, T-Shirts and souvenirs.

➢ The museum could act as a soft visitor management tool by promoting
sustainable tourism and foster a sense of social collective responsibility and
national identity amongst the public.

➢ The museum might organize field trips and guided tours to archaeological sites
with on-site interpretation, on-going archaeological digs and less visited sites.

➢ Opening hours should be extended and periodically reconsidered.

Besides the national museum, these roles can be partially accomplished by establishing
some regional, local or a network of site museums to present and promote the unique
AH and other heritage resources of a particular region\textsuperscript{357}. For instance, AM13 suggested an on-site specialized mining museum at Arja to showcase the unique mining AH of Sohar region in particular\textsuperscript{358}. One of the main goals for these museums would be to avoid centralization and provide the people who live outside Muscat with museums that are accessible to them. Besides, it makes more sense to establish specialized thematic museums at some regions with rich AH such as al-Sharqiyah, al-Batinah, al-Dakhyliah and Dhofar. For example, Salalah Museum in Dhofar can be used to promote and organize different thematic trails relative to frankincense sites, especially during \textit{al-Khareef} season, e.g. Caravan Trail, Frankincense Trail, and Wilfred Thesiger Trail.

The national governmental museums could be complemented by privately-owned museums. All these museums should be supervised by local or regional centres in cooperation with the Department of Museums at MOHC and managed by well-trained staff. Also, some forts and castles can be utilized in cooperation with MOT\textsuperscript{359}, especially that some of them are located nearby or in the centre of active areas such as Bahla Fort, Nizwa Fort, Sohar Fort, al-Khandaq Castle and Mirbat Castle.

\textbf{10.3.7.2. Open-air Museums as Archaeological Parks}

The second part of this recommendation in regard to museums suggests that such archaeological landscapes in some areas, such as Bat, Bahla, Khor Rori, Shenah, Shir, Qalhat, Arja and Bausher, are characterized by being large in size and rich in historical

\addtocounter{footnote}{1}
\footnotetext{357} This issue is critical, especially that previous archaeological works at some regions, such as al-Sharqiyah region, have produced enormous amount of AH (Table 1.2).
\footnotetext{358} This could be similar to the on-site frankincense museum at al-Balid.
\footnotetext{359} Some of these forts and castles, such as Nizwa Fort, Mirbat Castle and al-Khandaq Castle, have already been the target of MOT to be prepared for visitors; yet, there are some issues which are related to managerial aspect, maintenance, quality of interpretation (see chapters five, six and eight).
patterns; hence, it is recommended that these landscapes could be prepared as open-air museums. Take Shenah as an example, where in addition to the extensive Bronze Age tombs, there are various rock art sites, rich living cultural and natural heritage, pastoral life, geological formations, wadis and desert plants. Also, beside these landscapes, many respondents (e.g. AM14, AM17, BX1) did strongly recommend the development of historic quarters, harah, which can be considered as ready-made museums as well. Similar to what Davis (1999: 226) said, these open-museums appear to be in harmony with their cultural and natural surroundings and complementary parts of the interdependent natural eco-system; therefore, it is possible that the sense of the past becomes more reachable.360

Also, these genuine landscapes have the potential to become educational and recreational archaeological parks for the public, yet, without compromising their integrity361. Considering a holistic approach to quality PIN at these landscapes is important, especially that there are some on-going attempts to develop al-Balid, Khor Rori, Bahla, Shenah and Bat, if not, a serious negative impacts are expected, especially at the fragile ones. This emphasizes the importance of giving this issue a degree of serious attention. Therefore, it is recommended for the time being to attempt to do the following:

360 Therefore, Pearce (1990: 180) mentioned that ‘the presentation of open-air sites is one of the most important interfaces between the committed archaeologist and the public’.

361 According to Bagnall (2003: 87), ‘living heritage museum offered potential for exploring the role of heritage in the real sense’ where some tourists are not attracted to ‘institutional’ and ‘freedom limiting’ experiences (Harison 1997: 37). Therefore, such interpretive projects as Castell Henllys in Dyfed, Wales (UK), have become one of the most intensively studied Iron Age forts in Britain; as well as where more effort has been put into displaying and interpreting an Iron age settlement to the public (Mytum 1999, 2004).
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- There should be a joint effort among the various stakeholders involved in cultural landscape supervision and management.
- These museums could be managed directly by the Department of Museums at MOHC or by regional cultural centres and authority.
- The appointment of different trained staff, especially from the locals, to work as park ranger, tour guidance and security.
- The activation of voluntary works and public outreaching programs.
- The enforcement of visiting regulations can help in reducing the negative impacts providing that both host and guests are aware of them.
- International co-operation with those countries where open-air museums, eco-museums, or folk museums are well-established such as the Scandinavian countries, Britain, France and German.

10.3.8. Financial Resources for PIN

As Oman is a growing touristic destination, the people who are in power need to be more aware of the importance of putting more financial resources in improving PIN for AH. Touristic projects are rapidly developing in the country; thus, unless there is a practical way of cooperation, the sustainability of AH is definitely threatened. Consequently, integrative holistic practices, such as ICPI, should be seriously considered and repeatedly enforced by AH stewardship in tourism development and management plan in the Omani context, especially with funding being such as an issue in PIN (see Chapter Six). As it is a priority, the stewardship should have the task to develop the capital of interpretive program for a particular site until it becomes self-
supported. Funding archaeological research, documentation, interpretation, museums, training and evaluative research should be a national long-term commitment.

It can be claimed that in Oman to sustain heritage is to sustain tourism and vice versa (AM1); it is a double way relationship. However, this can not be accomplished without securing the required capital. Thus, the following recommendations provide some insight on how to manage this issue in Oman:

➢ There should be a set of policy and clear-cut financial management plans for the development of PIN for AH and other heritage attractions in the country according to well-studied phases, especially for those with universal and national significance. These plans should set priorities and implement the necessary work in close coordination with the tourism sector and other stakeholders.

➢ MOHC should be well-informed and explore the feasibility of the development plans for tourism in particular; accordingly, it should attempt to create a strategy for designating the most suitable ways to fund PIN for a particular archaeological site. For instance, rather than spending a lot of money on creating impressive attractive buildings for visitors, managers should first try less expensive improvement that address minor issues such as signage.

➢ As part of the legislative framework improvement, there should be a definite policy enforced by MOHC to obligate those developers or investors to provide and allocate some fund for documenting, excavating, preserving, presenting and maybe publishing of any archaeological findings in case there is any in their
project area\textsuperscript{362}. Also, they should be obliged to seek government consent before making any changes to a listed monument of national importance. Moreover, MOHC should impose more charges for any provided services such as the archaeological clearance report and field visits. The services income can be channelled into more general archaeological research, including PIN.

\begin{itemize}
\item There should be a business plan as part of the master management plan for heritage sites to work as guidance for income generation activities and programs such as charging for admission, special programs and events, on-site museums and travelling exhibitions, gift shops and souvenirs, catering, etc\textsuperscript{363}.
\item The creation of a partnership consists of a range of various stakeholders from private, public, community and maybe international bodies to help sponsoring interpretive projects at particular archaeological and historical sites, e.g. Petroleum Development of Oman (PDO) and Liquefied National Gas of Oman (LNG)\textsuperscript{364}.
\item Non-governmental organizations, such as the Historical Association of Oman\textsuperscript{365} and Geology Society of Oman\textsuperscript{366} should be given an active role in planning and managing PIN; they should be encouraged by several means to provide resources and funding.
\item In cooperation with the Ministry of Manpower and MOT, as well as with other governmental and private bodies, the local SMEs relative to community PIN
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{362} For example, according to Cadw's regulations, developers or exploiters are expected to fund unavoidable archaeological work associated with their developments including provision for adequate post-excavation work and archiving of the record (Cadw and Royal Commission 1999: 4).

\textsuperscript{363} For example, historic sites in the UK are increasingly used as venues for a variety of business and social functions such as conferences, product lunches, filming, wedding, receptions, fashions shows, banquets and corporate entertainment (English Tourism Council 2000: 49).

\textsuperscript{364} According to Cochrane and Tapper (2006), due to financial limitations in financial resources, a partnership approach is increasingly applied in managing World Heritage Sites.

\textsuperscript{365} See http://www.hao.org.om/

\textsuperscript{366} See http://www.gso.org.om/
should be empowered and encouraged with incentives to be one main source for funding in the future and enliven local archaeological sites. Community groups can work collaboratively and run commercial operations which generating benefits for the sites, especially that the Omani government is working to promote economically and socially schemes to provide young people with financial and technical supports which they need for their projects such as Sanad Program and Youth Projects Development Fund (Ministry of Information 2006). In line with this, MOT plans to provide financial assistance for smaller scale projects that enhance tourism products in a particular location (Parsons International Limited 2002). Enhancing activities may include handicrafts and souvenir shops, tour guidance, selling local gastronomy and the hire and sale of recreational equipment. This will expand the cultural sector's contribution in heritage tourism in general, yet, more supportive environment is required, especially for the locals.

There is a big need for a good strategy in promoting and marketing the interpretive infrastructure, services and products or the ‘interpretation business’ (Uzzell 1989a: 8). This has to be planned and implemented in cooperation with MOT in particular, and with other related private and governmental bodies such as the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Oman Centre for Investment Promotion and Exports Development.

For instance, in regard to traditional handicrafts, there is ample room to enhance handicraftsmen competitiveness, broaden the enterprises' access to national and foreign market and increase their productivity, trade volumes and revenue (World Bank 2001).

An important aspect here is taking advantage of the Internet which is a complementary off-site touristic interpretive medium to the on-site interpretive services and could change the way travellers engage with AH, especially the World Heritage sites (Macledo 2006b).
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➢ Fund raising mechanism through public sector organizations, philanthropic works, business patronage, professional help. Also, different types of publications for academic, public and educational purposes could be one source for revenue regeneration.

➢ The encouragement of voluntary work helps in archaeological works and PIN which can save the site management money, especially if it comes from the locals and well-informed people.

10.3.9. Public Awareness of AH Values

All mentioned recommendations can not be effectively managed and accomplished without raising the public awareness of AH via PIN which has done much to accomplish this as discussed in Chapter Three. According to the research findings, there are three main interdependent channels to develop this awareness, namely public archaeology, formal education and the media. This can be achieved through the following:

➢ MOH should establish a national interpretive strategy for raising the public awareness of the various values of AH with a special reference to those mentioned factors relative to PC, SSC and SCC.

➢ To enrich this strategy and make it more practical and connected to the national development plan, a joint inter-sectoral committee needs to be established and empowered by legislation. The committee should include representatives from non-governmental organizations, e.g. the Historical Association for Oman, in order to have a more active role in the planning and developing the strategy.
All members of the public should be provided with opportunity to express their perspectives in interpreting AH. As for the local community in particular, open meetings and the establishment of community steering committee is important to understand, reflect on and record their opinions and to bring about a process of greater understanding and awareness of their situation as a basis for informed decision making and community PIN development.

Those archaeological fieldworks which are located in accessible places to the public have more opportunity to welcome visitors, especially from the locals, niche tourists and school parties. Some good example to do this is Ras al-Jinz, Bat, al-Balid and Bausher as long-term archaeological fieldworks have been established\textsuperscript{369}. In regard to the voluntary work in particular, it could be very useful when there are rescue archaeological excavations in Oman, especially that there is a limited number of experts.

Festivals, such as Muscat Festival and Khareef Salalah Festival, should be widely utilized as these annual events attract a large number of domestic and international tourists. For instance, in 2005 Muscat Festival attracted 1,755,564 visitors (Ministry of Information 2006: 170).

In cooperation with different local authorities, youth clubs, museums and the regional centres of MOT, MOHC can promote specific days to be known as ‘Archaeology Week’ for instance where different interpretive programs are designed based on each region’s particular AH\textsuperscript{370}. Travelling archaeological

\textsuperscript{369} Tilley (1989) discussed that large-scale excavations should be conceived as an experiment in interpretive activity involving the public and theatres for promoting the past.

\textsuperscript{370} For instance, Arizona Archaeological Month provides various themes that focused on the recreation/tourism potential of Arizona’s archaeological resources; Tour the Past! (1989), Time Travel Arizona! (1990) and Discover Arizona’s Past-Time! (Hoffman 1997).
exhibitions around the country can be organized by MOHC and receives intense media coverage. Also, through educational programs, a resistance against marginalization and exclusion can accrue which can be done by designing workshops and tool kits to help communities explore local heritage. It could be a challenge, however, to be able to overcome some SCC, and because the interest in heritage might start after a long-term of educational process, some respondents mentioned that building up the public knowledge AH via PIN has to be organized through different stages in the Omani educational system (e.g. AM3, AM24). The current national historical curricula and pedagogical practices should be reviewed and reformed to include well-organized, thematic, scientific information about AH in chronological sense. Local sites in each region can be used as examples to illustrate national and general history (Prentice 1995). Certainly, there should be alternative interpretive programs, media, facilities, flexible timetable and early circulation of activities. Also, some of the graduate students from the Department of Archaeology, Sultan Qaboos University, can be prepared to work as history teachers and can be prepared through regular workshops in interpreting AH. All this has to be done in cooperation between the MOHC and Ministry of Education (AM7, AM10, AM24, BX2).

Certain international organizations can provide assistance in designing interpretive programs, training workshops and publication. For instance, in addition to publishing a manual for schoolteachers in both Arabic and English,

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371 This has proven success as for instance in Herian Project in Wales, UK (PLB Projects Ltd & Govannan Consultancy 2003, Welsh Assembly Government 2007, see http://www.herian.org/).

372 Similar to the English Heritage, Education on Site series can be provided as teacher' guides which are written especially for teachers, tutors and students to help them make the best use of the historic environment (Brisbane and Wood 1996).
ICCROM\textsuperscript{373} held many successful regional workshops as in Jordan and Tunisia in 2005 and reviewed pedagogic methods and curricula approaches for promoting awareness among schoolchildren about historic sites (Aslan 2005). Moreover, other countries’ experience, such as Bahrain (BX5) and Egypt (AM24), can be helpful, especially that SCC of these countries is relatively similar to Oman’s.

**10.4. THE CONTRIBUTION AND MAJOR FINDINGS**

By using Oman as a case study, the research has included several important contributions and remarks in respect to PIN of AH and its relationship to archaeotourism in particular. Briefly, the following section discusses the theoretical, methodological and practical contributions of this thesis.

**10.4.1. Theoretical Perspectives**

- In general, the available literature in regard to heritage PIN in developing countries is limited. The fundamental philosophy of PIN and the available literature is mostly written and developed by scholars from developed countries in Europe, North America and Australia. Therefore, it is hoped that this thesis represents a major source for those who are interested in learning about the status of heritage PIN in general in one of less developed countries, Oman. The study adds a new regional dimension to PIN of heritage resources literature.

- Based on the available literature, it can be said that there is a less interest in conducting critical research relative to PIN of AH than other types of cultural

\textsuperscript{373} The International Centre for the Study of Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property
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heritage such as historical monuments and living heritage. The current literature is mainly focused on primary interpretation rather than PIN and mostly written by and for professionals (e.g. Magan culture). Also, it is more focused on off-site PIN (museums, exhibitions) than the on-site one. Therefore, this study contributes to and expands the knowledge about the major challenging issues face on-site PIN, especially in developing countries. It also presents the first critical comprehensive and empirical study focusing on PIN of AH, in particular for the example of Oman.

➤ In regard to the application of integrative approaches in heritage PIN, the available literature is limited and poorly developed, let aside AH. It can be claimed that this research could be one of the few systematic studies that were undertaken to improve the potential of PIN for heritage resources by using such approaches.

➤ New definitions are proposed for the concept of PIN and archæotourism (see Chapter Three) which were basically developed for the interest of this research to add new dimensions and expand the available meanings of these two terms in the academic and professional senses. For instance, both definitions are not merely focused on the physical features of a single particular site, but they include the associated intangible heritage and the wider cultural landscape. Also, the study has assisted in the development and the establishment of such concepts as ‘sustainable PIN’, ‘senseless and sensible PIN’, ‘Thematic Chronological-Spatial Interpretation’ and ‘community PIN’ in regard to historical and archaeological monuments by referring to practical examples from Oman.
ICPI model (Figure 8.6) is a contribution to PIN studies, especially those relative to AH. Here, the model provides an operational definition rather than merely conceptual for the concept of ‘holistic interpretation’ (Beck and Cable 2002: 47). It confirmed and added to the theoretical perspectives relative to PIN planning models, e.g. the whole person, the whole context. For instance, based on the empirical findings, the model shows the importance of considering both the micro-context and macro-context of the interpreted site. Therefore, a whole context in archaeological site interpretation means presenting the site as a whole entity rather than separated parts or objects and in relation to its wider cultural landscape. This emphasized the important of adopting hermeneutic perspectives in PIN of AH. Also, this research confirmed the significance of holistic approaches in communicating constructive interpretive experience and sustaining AH resources. Herein, PIN is not considered as merely a touristic service, but as a critical tool for developing visitors’ experience, the host community, site management and the interpreted sites. Also, ICPI illustrates the importance of using recursive dynamic approaches in planning, managing and evaluating holistic PIN instead of linear one.

While the visitors represent the focal point of most interpretive approaches, in ICPI the micro-impact of PIN is highly considered. These two elements are interdependent; one can not be separated from the other. In this sense, interpreting AH should not be designed to convey a particular message to visitors only, but to strength the community archaeology and empower community PIN.
➢ The importance of community PIN for heritage attractions, especially in regard to archaeological attractions, has not been researched adequately, in particular in developing countries. Accordingly, the research described how a particular community can become an active stakeholder in interpreting AH within its vicinity and consequently it develops more awareness about sustainable PIN and AH values, including archaeotourism.

➢ The interrelationship between SCC and PIN has received less attention in the current literature in general. Thus, this study provides a new insight to those scholars and professionals who are interested in developing PIN (professionally and theoretically) and confirms the influential strength of SCC and its potential to be either a constructive and/or destructive force in PIN, especially in developing countries.

10.4.2 Methodological Perspectives

➢ This research can be considered as the first of its kind that is conducted on a large scale in Oman in regard to PIN of AH. There is no previous in-depth research in regard to heritage PIN in general or archaeotourism in particular, especially with the framework of socio-cultural perspectives. This research provides insight for the significance of considering holistic approaches when studying PIN of heritage resources; herein the phenomenon is studied in relation to its micro and macro contexts in which it is existed following in this the hermeneutics viewpoints.

➢ There is limited research which refers to the significance of applying constructivist perspectives in regard to PIN of AH. For instance, the linkage
between SCC factors in constructing the interpretive experience of visitors has been barely explored. Similarly, this can be said about the influence of PC factors and their connection to the personal experience of visitors. Also, the used methods in this study have aimed at exploring the controversial issues in PIN of AH, practically in their contexts, and utilized this for the benefit of producing balanced perspectives amongst different stakeholders. For instance, the reconstruction of tomb 401 at Bat (Section 9.2.1). Also, instead of excluding the alternative interpretations for AH inherited by local communities as at Shir (Section 9.2.5.1), their inclusion can bring benefits for all stakeholders, including hosts and guests. Besides, both constructivist and constructionist perspectives were highly considered in ICPI as this has been discussed in chapters eight and nine.

The use of case study approach and various sources of evidence in understanding PIN of AH in Oman represents a compelling practical example for the importance of using such methodology in deepening and widening the knowledge about a particular phenomenon as discussed in Section 4.3. This has been underpinned by applying the ‘criterion sampling’ technique which ‘can add an important qualitative component to a management information system or an ongoing program monitoring system’ (Patton 1990: 177).

Also, and as discussed in Section 4.4.3, this study represents an example for what is known as the applicability of ‘analytic generalization’ used in case study method (Yin 2003: 32) where the selected units of analysis (archaeological sites) represent and provide clear evidence for the current general status of PIN at

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374 For instance, the consideration of these alternative interpretations helps in communicating a ‘whole context’ to the audience.
archaeological sites in Oman. Again, this has been supported by using criterion and opportunistic sites discussed in Section 4.4.2. The gathered evidence from a particular unit of analysis presents similar findings where one issue can be repeatedly seen in more than one site.

10.4.3. Practical Perspectives

- The findings in chapters five, six and seven emphasized the critical meaning of considering three main factors, i.e. PC, SSC, and SCC, in any PIN for AH as it is the case in Oman. As these contexts are strongly interlinked to one another, they should be addressed holistically through integrative approaches. The different issues discussed in regard to these factors could become a directive and source of evidence for some of the major issues in AH management, archaeotourism and heritage PIN in Oman. Also, they could work as incentives to consider the application of new approaches in AH management and development and the heritage tourism in general. Certainly, there could be other understudied factors which are not covered in detail in this study; however, the gathered data and pictures can be archived for further research as one of the advantage for case study is that it ‘provides a data source from which further analysis can be made’ (Blaxter et al. 2006: 74).

- The study and its findings can be linked to action and their insights contribute to changing practices which is another advantage for the case study approach (Blaxter et al. 2006). To explain, this study provides some direction and reference to those who are dealing with heritage attractions and PIN industry in order to better realize the value of integrative approaches in heritage PIN in
communicating the myriad values mentioned in Chapter Three and creating a competitive destination without threatening the sustainability of touristic attractions. Also, it makes them more mindful about the critical significance of considering SCC and community participation during the Audit and Integration processes before moving to the next stage, Planning and Themeing (Figure 8.6). By so doing, the long-term objectives for Oman’s Economy in regard to the tourism sector could become more achievable (see Section 2.8), especially that ICPI encourages phased PIN when needed which is another practical aspect, i.e. managerial realities are counted.

➢ This study emphasizes the importance of specialization in designing PIN at archaeological sites instead of total dependency on generic imported and expert-led practices from different contexts; a special consideration must be given to both the interpreted subject/object and its micro and macro contexts.

➢ Using the Thematic Chronological-Spatial Interpretation technique to design thematic interpretive programs that are capable to interlink both the core and peripheral heritage resources is one practical contribution to PIN of AH in particular, especially in a country with rich living AH such as Oman. This is important, where the majority of archaeological sites are located in rural and mountainous remote areas where the physical context within and around these sites represents a source of threat for their sustainability.

➢ Also, this study tells those people responsible for heritage PIN in Oman that considering the use of a constructive approach in interpreting archaeological sites, as confirmed by this research, is by far better than applying positivistic
approach in shaping the knowledge of visitors and communicating a mindful interpretive experience\textsuperscript{375}.

\> The research findings confirmed the critical need for the development of new policies and directives in regard to AH management and heritage tourism, especially during this establishment phase of the tourism industry in Oman. Creating a new operational strategy to enforce the practical implementation and enforcement of these policies is important as well.

\> This study has called for building a practical collaborative partnership amongst the major stakeholders of AH which should be a primary goal as working in isolation will neither serve the long-term objective for the heritage tourism in Oman, nor will it sustain the irreplaceable archaeological resources. This is vitals due to the growing interest in heritage resources in Oman; if not their integrity and their interpretation might be compromised for short-term economic benefits (see Section 3.4).

\> The study has concluded that in practical sense there are three main interconnected channels where PIN could play a major role in communicating the values of AH to the public; they are: formal education; the media; and public archaeology.

\> The study expands the understanding about the critical role of PIN in sustaining AH. The recognition and application of this fact is important for SSC as this repeatedly confirmed by the findings, e.g. community PIN.

\textsuperscript{375} Unfortunately, the latter approach has been used continuously even at the renovated Omani Museum and the newly-established museum in al-Balid as this confirmed by the field visits in September 2007.
10.5. LIMITATIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This thesis has limitations which simultaneously can be considered as directions and opportunities for further research in the future. These limitations can be summarized in the following points:

➢ The study area has been limited to AH in Oman due to time, distance and funding constraints\(^{376}\). PIN of AH in some of the neighbouring countries, such as Egypt and Jordan, is relatively more developed (Shunnaq \textit{et al.} 2008). Thus, comparing and studying the current status of PIN for AH at these countries would enrich this kind of research and add insight to our understanding of heritage PIN in the Arab countries, e.g. the application of integrative approaches in interpreting AH to the public. Also, conducting comparative studies with those countries that have a shared history with Oman, such as U.A.E\(^{377}\) (e.g. Magan culture), would help in strengthening collaborative practical and theoretical research in regard to PIN. Consequently, this could provide more holistic perspectives for the key issues facing PIN of heritage resources in the region. Also, this would amplify the expected values (i.e. socio-economic, educational, and recreational) from PIN in micro and macro sense.

➢ Although the study referred to other heritage resources that are strongly interlinked to the selected archaeological sites and AH in general, such as Wadi Dawkah, the turtle reserve and historical quarters, however, these resources need to be investigated systematically in depth as these represents main attractions for

\(^{376}\) Denscombe (1998: 39) argues that the physical, social and historical boundaries are major effective elements in case study approach which refers to the exclusion of factors that occur outside the boundaries which could \textit{'have genuine impact on activities, processes and relationship within the case study'}; they also include the \textit{‘difficulty in dealing with those occasions when outside factors temporarily intrude on the zone of the research’}.

\(^{377}\) Both Oman and U.A.E are members of the GCC.
both the Omani and foreign visitors. Also, their integration in PIN plans will require further empirical oriented research. The criterion sites selected for this study and the methods used in collecting the required data could work as guidelines for these research.

- Accessibility to some archaeological sites could be another constraint where the researcher faced difficulties in accessing at least one of the selected sites, Shir, due to its remote and mountainous location.

- Another limitation is the local community actual participation in PIN, community PIN, needs to be more explored in regard to its application in PIN of AH. For instance, this would shed light on what would be most important to people and most resistant to change if interpretive programs were to be designed at a particular site.

- Similarly, although the research findings demonstrate the limited involvement of the private sector in interpreting AH in Oman and the several reasons behind this, further research should be carried out, knowing that the government considers this sector as one of the key players, if not the most important one, in developing and managing the tourism industry in Oman in the long-term, including heritage attractions.

- As appeared from this study, the limited role of education sector and the media in communicating AH values via various interpretive media could become the key reason behind the current status of PIN for AH in Oman. Thus, in-depth research are urgently required if these two sectors are meant to become active tools in using PIN methods to communicate, appreciate and protect
archaeological sites in Oman and simultaneously developing PIN as a profession and as a discipline in practical and theoretical sense.

- Although, this study describes the applicability and practicality of the proposed ICPI model and the *Thematic Chronological-Spatial Interpretation* technique in communicating the values of AH in Oman, their evaluation requires empirical, team-work and problem-oriented research. It should be realized that ICPI is part of the solution in the wider macro-context in which PIN and archaeotourism is situated.

As this can be considered as a catalytic prelude study to PIN and heritage-based tourism in Oman, it is suggested that further research is needed in such aspects as:

- **The unique interpretive elements in Omani heritage**, e.g. frankincense, copper. For instance, maritime archaeology is of a national significance for the history of Oman as AH evidences to this via Magan culture remains, yet, there is no particular research on how this heritage can be utilized in heritage tourism through interpretive provision. One reason for this might be the difficulties in accessing the related sites in comparison to the dry land sites\(^{378}\).

- **Approaches to heritage PIN for school and higher education in Oman**. As this has been one of the utmost pressing points mentioned by the research findings, therefore, it is vital to conduct systematic research in regard to this subject instead of applying previous practices which might be unsuitable for the Omani context and its educational system.

\(^{378}\) In fact, although maritime archaeology and underwater archaeology represent major part of archaeology all over the world, yet, there is a shortcoming in research relative to its interpretation to the public (e.g. Aiello 1998, Jameson and Scott-Ireton 2007).
PIN and branding Oman as a cultural heritage destination. As Oman is at the early stage of branding its touristic products, including heritage resources, it is important that MOT conducts oriented-research towards this subject to improve the quality of the total tourism chain.

As Omani government is interested in niche tourism, it would be important to conduct field-research on the role of PIN in increasing niche markets in Oman.

Dissonant PIN and AH where, for instance, in-depth studies concerning the impact of SCC on PIN for AH resources in particular, can be of a special interest for those countries where this aspect represents a driving factor in some regions such as the Middle Eastern and Islamic countries.

The concept of sustainable PIN and heritage attractions management where so far, there is more theoretical research than practical on the application of sustainability concept in interpreting heritage resources to the public.

The development of research methods relative to the concept and role of community-based research in heritage PIN is a critical element in accomplishing sustainable heritage tourism and various benefits to both the interpreted heritage and the involved stakeholders.

10.6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

It is hoped that this research provides an insight about PIN for one of the understudied heritage resources, AH, especially in developing countries. Also, although the major aim of this study is to fill a particular gap in the social sciences, yet the research findings could practically help the stewardship of AH in many other countries, specifically with similar problems in PIN, to adopt integrative approaches in addressing
these problems. Certainly, the unique contexts of these countries need to be seriously and carefully considered in interpretive planning.

It is very important to bear in mind that this research does not claim that it has presented an exhaustive detailed discussion for all aspects of the researched subject as 'the search for the whole is hard work' (Tilden 1977: 40). Thus, new methods and tools are expected to shed light on many other issues and enable a better understanding in the future. Besides, like in other social sciences research, there can not be one objective final conclusion for a particular enquiry.

Professionalism in PIN is highly required as PIN has become more complex, integrated with different sectors, and multi-disciplinary oriented. Therefore, specialists in PIN of AH are critically needed and must be trained properly. It is hoped that the newly-established international organization, ICIP, will provide the technical and financial assistance to its state members in accomplishing this mission, especially in less developed countries. ICIP organization should be reminded to consider the 'specific' or 'idiographic' issues for each state member as possible. In line with this, the role of PIN as a cross-cultural communicator should be strengthen and supported. It is one effective way to deepen the understanding of tourists for the heritage of a particular area in the world and its universal concepts. Therefore, it is a global responsibility.
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APPENDICES
### Appendix One: The Criterion and Opportunistic Sites

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Criterion Sites</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>al-Maysar</strong></td>
<td>A mining and smelting settlement in Wadi Samad, al-Sharqiyyah region, dated to the late third millennium B.C. It was excavated by a German team in the 1980s. Although the building remains of the eastern part of the settlements have suffered from erosion by the water stream of Wadi Samad, the preserved settlement remains extend over 200 x 70 m. Archaeological excavations revealed structural remains made of mud-brick and stones, soap stones vessels, pottery, furnaces, copper ingots and seals (Weisgerber 1983:1992).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Bahla Fort</strong></td>
<td>Located in Bahla Oasis, al-Dhakhliyah region, it is the first Omani sites to be included in the World Heritage List in 1987 due to its reflection for the military architecture in its different periods of occupation. Also, it contains impressive Islamic decorative elements in plaster and wood. The fort was built on an earth mound within the city ancient wall (ca. 13 km long) and is surrounded by cultivated lands, date palms, and historic monuments such as the old market, the Grand Mosque and the old quarters of the town, harat. The fort is triangular walled complex (ca. 200m square). The main features of the fort are the gate corridors, al-Qasabah (the oldest part), the houses in its south-eastern and south-western parts, defensive towers and the public buildings (al-Busaidi 2004). In addition to the Islamic remains, there are some pre-Islamic parts as well. In cooperation with Moroccan team and other international experts, MOHC started the restoration of the fort and other affiliated sites, such as the Grand Mosque, in 1993. In 2001, MOHC signed an agreement with W.S. Atkins, a British company, to prepare heritage management plan for the whole Oasis in which the fort is located. There were different archaeological excavations carried out by French and German archaeologists which unearthed remains belonging to different historical eras, e.g. soft stone vessels, local pottery sherds and Chinese porcelain. Yet, there is a lack of systematic research and many gaps in our understanding of the sequence of historical events (MOHC 2004) (see also <a href="http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/433">http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/433</a>).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Bat, al-Ayn, al-Khatam</strong></td>
<td>Bat together with al-Ayn tombs and al-Khatam tower were inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1988. Its importance comes from its location on the ancient trade routes. The main site Bat was excavated by Danish expedition in the 1970s and later in 2005 by German-Omani team which carried out restoration for 1145 and reconstruction for tomb 401(Weisgerber 2005). Basically, there are five main towers, necropolis, and settlements. The necropolis consists of a large number of beehive tombs, Hafit types and Umm an-Nar types, dated to the third millennium B.C. The tower 1145, which is located south of the</td>
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| The Land of Frankincense Sites | A group of sites located in Dhofar region and consists of four main sites: the ancient port of Khor Rori; al-Balid; Wadi Dawkah; and Shisur Wubar. These sites were inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2000, because they are evidence of the ancient frankincense and incense trade (see [http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1010](http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1010)). They are located in area renown for cultivating the frankincense trees as in Wadi Dawkah. Khor Rori, excavated by American and Italian experts, was a main port during the pre-Islamic period from which frankincense was exported (Avanzini 2002). Shisur Wubar, excavated in the early 1990s, is an inland centre from which frankincense was exported by caravans to other parts of Arabia and Syria. The excavations unearthed fortress remains, pottery, glass and frankincense-related wares. These remains are dated by archaeologists to the first century B.C and early and middle-Islamic periods (Zarins 2001, MOHC 2003). As for al-Balid, the site was surrounded by an ancient wall and fortified with water trenches, several gates and six towers. The excavations revealed that al-Balid was an active medieval centre that had contacts with ports in China, India, East Africa, Yemen, Iraq and Europe. Incense and frankincense were its main exports. Several findings were revealed such as The Grand Mosque with 114 columns, pottery, porcelain and coins (Zarins 2001, MOHC 2003).

| Ras al-Jinz | Located in Ras al-Jinz Turtle Reserve, 11 km to the south of Ras al-Hadd, al-Sharqiyyah region, that marks the eastern extremity of the Arabian Peninsula. It has been excavated by a French-Italian team since 1980s. Groups of prehistoric settlements and related burials cairns suggest continuity of occupation from Early Holocene times to the Iron Age. The archaeological evidence made clear that the economic bases of earlier settlement were not much different from the present ones, fishing and seafaring trade. Ras al-Jinz2 has produced some of the most important archaeological findings in Oman that confirm the ancient international contacts between ancient Oman and other civilizations in Indus Valley and Mesopotamia. Some of these findings are mud-brick buildings, Harappan painted jars, Indus inscriptions, chlorite vessels, copper objects (e.g. rings, pins, fish-hooks), stamp seals, ivory comb, incense burner, copper necklace and bitumen (Cleuziou and Tosi 2000).

| Shir Tombs | This site, which was briefly studies by a German team in 1995, is located in al-Qabil, al-Sharqiyyah region. Shir tombs lie on the rounded mountain crest some 1700 m above sea level. At Shir, different types of tombs can be observed such as conical tower and igloo-shaped towers. |
These tombs differ in size, height and manner of construction (e.g. they may have single or double wall construction). The towers are positioned in rows and their entrances face approximately east. The largest are preserved to a height of over 7 m. In their form and manner of building the towers are most closely related to the so-called beehive tombs of the Hafit Period, early 3rd millennium B.C. They have a single small burial chamber and stand to a height of 3 m. Approximately, the chronology of these tombs extends from the second half of the third millennium B.C to Iron Age and probably pre-Islamic periods. The archaeological objects were mostly Early Iron Age potsherds (Yule and Weisgerber 1998).

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Opportunistic Sites</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Arja</td>
<td>A copper mining and smelting settlement, located in Sohar, al-Batinah region, surveyed and excavated by different archaeologists, especially German archaeometallurgists. Arja is located in rich copper deposits in Wadi al-Jizzi where there is a number of slag heaps, mines, remains of furnaces, irrigation canals, settlements, copper ingots and potsherds dated to different periods, especially the Islamic period. Nearby Arja, a large prehistoric early smelting settlement has been discovered where stone circle, jasper tools and flakes cover its surface as well as potsherds from later periods (Costa, 1978, Weisgerber 1978b). Without excavations, little more can be said about these significant sites.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bausher</td>
<td>Located in Bausher area, in Muscat region, excavated by different archaeologists since 1979, (Costa et al. 1999). Bausher is an example for a living examples of traditional life preserved within the capital area and supported by the availability of natural resources and security. Due to its strategic location, Bausher area was a major point on the old caravan routes. In addition to the historic buildings, such as forts, castles, irrigation canals and old quarters, there are different ancient settlements and numerous stone tombs possibly ranging from the third millennium B.C to the first millennium B.C. Archaeological excavations unearthed various objects such as human remains, soft stones, pottery, beads, swords. one of the most famous archaeological features of archaeology at Bausher is the Honeycomb Cemetery, located in the middle of Wadi Bausher; which is formed of large wadi boulders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qalhat City</td>
<td>Located in Qalhat in Sur, al-Sharqiyyah region. This Islamic seaport is situated on a small triangular coastal shelf overlooking the Arabian Sea. Qalhat's position on the main sea route from India to Persia and the Gulf and the possibility of year-long sailing on the monsoon winds from Qalhat to and from India are the city's defining characteristics (Bhacker and Bhacker 2004). Some of its main features are Bibi Maryam mausoleum (14th century AD), water</td>
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</table>
cisterns, tombs with inscribed gravestones, *hammam* and the Great Mosque. Also, fragments of Islamic glass, pottery, coins and Chinese porcelain can be easily found all over the city. Since no systematic archaeological excavations have yet been carried out, thus the history of Qalhat is poorly documented which makes it difficult to reconcile the wealth significance of the city. Qalhat appears in the 13th-16th centuries AD in the accounts of foreign travellers and the Portuguese conquistadors as a bustling, cosmopolitan seaport at the centre of Indian Ocean monsoon trade and Arabian capital of the Hurmuz dynasty (Bhacker and Bhacker 2004) One of the best historical accounts about Qalhat was written by Abu Abdullah Muhammad Ibn Battuta, a famous Moroccan traveler from the 14th AD, who talked about the city when it was ruled by former rulers from Hurmuz (see al-Zadjali 1997, Bhacker and Bhacker 2004, Costa 2004).

### Shenah
Shenah, located in al-Qabil in al-Batinah region, is an area of high biological, geological, archaeological and cultural diversity. In regard to its archaeology it is mainly composed of a great number of limestone beehive tombs, similar to those found in Bat and petroglyphs. Two techniques were used to make Shenah petroglyphs which are pecking and chiselling. Most images are zoomorphs, e.g. sheep, leopard, camel, gazelle, ibex and horse (Insall 1999).

### Sohar Fort
The fort is located in Sohar city, al-Batinah region. It was excavated by French team in the 1980s in order to provide guidelines for its restoration which started in 1992. The excavations uncovered some structures from the 14th century AD and also the level of the city prior to the building of the fort. The final results of these excavations were a division of the history of Sohar Fort into twelve levels of cultural phases extend between the 2nd century AD and 17 century AD. The archaeological findings include coins, glass bottles, ceramic and porcelain (MOHC 1996, Kervran 2004).

### Tawi Ubuylah
A copper mining and smelting settlement located in Mahadah area, al-Dhahirah region. Here, there are Bronze Age, Iron Age and Early Islamic slag and other installations, but there was never a survey in the vicinity and surroundings for tombs, settlements and forts (Gerd Weisgerber: personal communication: 14/April/2006). Some of the most observable archaeological features are building remains, roasting pits, sherds of pottery, hammer stones.
Appendix Two: Field Visit Form

Public Interpretation of Archaeological Heritage and Archaeotourism in Oman
Field Visit Form

- Section One

The Site Name: ____________________________
Code Ref.: ____________________________

Location: ____________________________

Date of Visit: ____________________________

Group: ____________________________

Section Two: Notes and Comments
Appendix Three: An Expert Survey Form

Public Interpretation of Archaeological Heritage and Archaeotourism in Oman
A survey of experts in archaeological interpretation for the public

The Aim:

The public interpretation refers to the presentation of archaeological sites and findings to the non-specialists such as tourists, school parties and local communities through various interpretive media such as guided trails, tours guides, on-site exhibition, audio/video tours and panels. The focus of this research is the critical issue of archaeological site interpretation to the public in the Sultanate of Oman. Interpretation is considered essential to the achievement of a myriad of values, including educational, economic, social and cultural values. One major aim for public interpretation is to enliven archaeological sites, as well as sustaining their environment for present and future generations.

I have specially selected archaeological interpretation experts and I hope you will be willing to complete the survey. The survey comprises open-ended questions that should enable you to provide as much detail as you feel you want to in your responses. I would like to thank you for your valuable concern and your help in advance. I should mention that all information that you provide is confidential and used for this research only. Please let me know if you have any queries in relation to this survey.

Thank you for your help.

Yaqoub Al-Busaidi
PhD. Candidate
University of Wales Institute, Cardiff
E-Mail: albusaidi55@yahoo.com or yabusaid@squ.edu.om

- Section One: Personal Details:

Name: Position:
Institution: Specialty:
Nationality (optional):

Section Two: Fieldwork experience in the Sultanate of Oman (Please move to the Section Three if you do not have fieldwork experience in the Sultanate of Oman).
2.1. From your fieldwork experience in the Sultanate of Oman:

(a). What fieldwork experience do you have in the Sultanate of Oman?

(b). What do you think of the location and accessibility of your site?

(c). How about the archaeological significance and scale of excavation?

(d). What are the opportunities for generating income from visitors to your ongoing dig or after?

(e). What ways would you think of to provide more specialist services for specialist groups?

(f). What sources of practical help and financial support would you recommend for the site interpretation?

(g). How about promoting the site and working with the media?

(h). Please comment on the public reaction, curiosity, and involvement in your excavation.

(i). What about the recreational pattern in the area – is it in an area which is popular with tourists, or day visitors interested in heritage or is it an area which has only local residents?

(j). In regard to the duration – is the site opened for a short-term, seasonal, or year-round and on going?

(k). In relation to the site, do you think that on-site interpretation is of interest of further education class or community?

(l). Do you think that the sites are adequately promoted?

- Section Three: Interpretation Methods

3.1. What do you think of the following interpretation methods for archaeological sites in the Sultanate of Oman:

(a). Experimental archaeology (on site/off site).

(b). Site reconstructions/construction (on site/off site).

- Section Four: Public Interpretation in the Sultanate of Oman

4.1. Is public interpretation important for archaeological sites in the Sultanate of Oman? Why?

4.2. Do you think that the past is presented properly to the public through on-site/in situ interpretation in the Sultanate of Oman?

4.3. Do you think that the past is presented properly to the public through off-site interpretation such as museums, exhibitions, and public media?
4.4. How would you describe the current public interpretation of archaeological sites in the Sultanate of Oman?

4.5 From your experience, would you say that the general public is interested in archaeology in the Sultanate of Oman?

4.6. From your point of view, what are the main constraints/ issues that face public interpretation of archaeological sites in the Sultanate of Oman? Are there any examples you would like to provide?

4.7: In your opinion, what are the most important steps needed to develop public interpretation of archaeological sites in the Sultanate of Oman?

4.8. How would you describe the role of public interpretation in archaeological sites sustainability?

4.9. What would you suggest are good examples of on-site interpretation in the Sultanate of Oman?

4.10. What would you think are bad examples of on-site interpretation in the Sultanate of Oman?

4.11. Are there any examples of sites which are currently not interpreted, but you think should be interpreted as a high priority? Why?

4.12. Are there some sites which you do think should NOT be interpreted in the Sultanate of Oman?

4.13. In your opinion, is it important to have public interpretation for archaeological sites in every region or local area in the Sultanate of Oman? Why?.

4.14. Which interpretive methods would you recommend for remote sites?

4.15. How do you see the relationship between the public interpretation and education in the Sultanate of Oman?

4.16. In the Sultanate of Oman, how do you see the connection between the public interpretation and archaeological tourism, in particular what are the main:

a). **Strengths** of interpreting archaeological sites to the tourists;

b). **Weaknesses** of interpreting archaeological sites to the tourists;

c). **Opportunities** of interpreting archaeological sites to the tourists; and

d). **Threats** of interpreting archaeological sites to the tourists.

**Section Five: Recommendations**

5.1. Are there any themes that would you like to be developed through archaeological sites; e.g. copper mining trails, caravan trails?
5.2. What recommendations would you make in relation to archaeological site development in relation to the public interpretation (e.g. facilities, security, staff, registration)?

5.3. Are you aware of any studies or documents related to the topic of public interpretation in relation to the Sultanate of Oman or United Arab Emirates?

5.4. Is there anything else which you would like to tell me about in relation to public interpretation of archaeological sites in the Sultanate of Oman?

Once again, thank you very much for your participation in this project. Your support is highly appreciated. Please let me know if you would like to receive a copy of my analysis of the findings.
Appendices

Appendix Four: Interviews

Appendix 4.A: Structured Interview

Public Interpretation of Archaeological Heritage and Archaeotourism in Oman

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code: AS1</th>
<th>Type of Interview: Structured (Arabic)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date: 03/09/2005</td>
<td>Place:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The Aim:
The public interpretation refers to the presentation of archaeological sites and findings to the non-specialists such as tourists, school parties and local communities through various interpretive media such as guided trails, tours guides, on-site exhibition, audio/video tours and panels. The focus of this research is the critical issue of archaeological site interpretation to the public in the Sultanate of Oman. Interpretation is considered essential to the achievement of a myriad of values, including educational, economic, social and cultural values. One major aim for public interpretation is to enliven archaeological sites, as well as sustaining their environment for present and future generations.

I have specially selected archaeological interpretation experts and I hope you will be willing to complete the survey. The survey comprises open-ended questions that should enable you to provide as much detail as you feel you want to in your responses. I would like to thank you for your valuable concern and your help in advance. I should mention that all information that you provide is confidential and used for this research only. Pease let me know if you have any queries in relation to this survey.

Thank you for your help.

Yaqoub Al-Busaidi
PhD. Candidate
University of Wales Institute, Cardiff
E-Mail: albuseid55@yahoo.com or yabusaid@squ.edu.om.

- Section One: Personal Details:

Name: Position:

Institution: Specialty:

Nationality (optional):

Section Two: Fieldwork experience in the Sultanate of Oman (Please move to the Section Three if you do not have fieldwork experience in the Sultanate of Oman).
2. From your fieldwork experience in the Sultanate of Oman:

2.1. What fieldwork experience do you have in the Sultanate of Oman?
- Two seasons at the site of Manal, Sultan Qaboos University Expedition;
- Ras al-Hadd and Ras al-Jinz – French-Italian expedition;
- Bawshar, Ministry of Heritage and Culture;
- Bandar al-Jassah, project supervisor;
- Wadi Indam;
- Qarat Kibrit
- Architecture research.

2.2. What do you think of the location and accessibility of your site?
All sites are easy to be reached, the main roads are asphalted.
Promotion is missing.

2.3. How about the archaeological significance and scale of excavation?

Ras al-Jinz and Ras al-Hadd are very important for archaeologists because they provide evidence from several periods from the third millennium B.C- the first millennium B.C.

The site of Ras al-Jinz is located inside the Turtle Sanctuary which is a national environmental park.

The site of Manal is dated to the second and first millennium B.C. It provides us with early examples of structures during these periods.

2.4. What are the opportunities for generating income from visitors to your ongoing dig or after?

From my experience, I noticed that many tourists visit the sites. These sites represent one of the main resources for tourists to learn about the history of Oman. For example, Ras al-Jinz and Ras al-Hadd are typical sites for this. In addition to the archaeological sites, there are also the green-back turtles. These coastal sites are typical for tourism because they provide both natural and cultural attractions.

Manal is a good touristic site, but it needs development. It is only ca. 100 km from Muscat. I suggest an open air museum that displays the site and the life-style of the inhabitants.

2.5. What ways would you think of to provide more specialist services for specialist groups?

They could be good examples to create experimental archaeology.

2.6. What sources of practical help and financial support would you recommend for the site interpretation?

There are two main things; technical support and promotional work. The technical side includes preparing the sites for visitors without compromising their integrity. After doing this, the role of promotion comes as an important part to attract visitors.
The financial support could involve different participants. In addition to the governmental support, private sectors, international institutions, and societies must be involved in the development plan. It is possible that the Ministry of Tourism creates promotional exhibitions for these sites. The project of Bausher is one of the main projects that the Omani Historical Association is planning to do. The project aims at creating databases about archaeology and the living heritage of Bausher area in order to use them for future planning. This will be done in coordination with the Ministry of Heritage and Culture, The Ministry of Housing, and Muscat Municipality. One main goal of the project is to see the possibility of developing some archaeological sites in the area. There will be a web site about the project contains various information about the area. The supervision board will include different experts from Bait Zubair Museum, Sultan Qaboos University, Ministry of Heritage and Culture and others.

2.7. How about promoting the site and working with the media?
There was no promotion at all. What you see is only repeated old pictures/out of date from the 80s, and inappropriate presentation and interpretation. The role of the media in raising the public awareness of archaeology and promotion is not available

2.8. Please comment on the public reaction, curiosity, and involvement in your excavation.
Omani people are always interested and curious to know about archaeology. Archaeology, as a discipline, is not a common mainstream in Oman.
From my experience, I think people are eager to learn history through archaeology. At all sites, Manal, Ras, al-Jinz and Wadi Indam I noticed that people were very interested.

I do encourage people to be involved in archaeological excavation. This was one of my ideas at the Paleolithic site of Qarat Kibrit in Adam. I invited school students to visit us while we were doing archaeology.

2.9. What about the recreational pattern in the area – is it in an area which is popular with tourists, or day visitors interested in heritage or is it an area which has only local residents?
Bar al-Jassah area has been already developed to attract tourists. The project is managed by Bar al-Jassah Company which is owned by al-Zubair. There is a plan to reconstruct off-site models for the ancient graves inside the ‘cultural village’ at the Bar al-Jassah Resort. The story of the site will be interpreted according to scientific documentations. The excavations at Bar al-Jassah were rescue archaeology. The only way to reach the sites was by boats; nowadays, there is a constructed road leads you directly to the planned area. The current hotels are built on the same archaeological area; the company removed all archaeological features.

2.10. In regard to the duration – is the site opened for a short-term, seasonal, or year-round and on going?
Seasonal, except for Bar al-Jassah which was year-around fieldwork.
2.11. In relation to the site, do you think that on-site interpretation is of interest of further education class?
For sure it is; however, the investment of archaeological sites in education is very limited. The situation in Bahrain and the Emirates is better off.

2.12. In relation to the site, do you think that on-site interpretation is of interest for the local community?
Certainly, it is important. Always the local community benefits from any developing projects. If we prepare archaeological sites for visitors, the local income will increase. In addition to the economic values, there are also educational.

2.13. Do you think that the sites are adequately promoted?
No, they are not.

- Section Three: Interpretation Methods

3- What do you think of the following interpretation methods for archaeological sites in the Sultanate of Oman:

3.1. Experimental archaeology (on site/off site).
It will be great if we could benefit from experimental archaeology in interpretation within museums as in the Emirates, e.g. seafaring life-style. It is a good promotional tool. I recommend preparing conferences, workshops, programs and activities in order to benefit from experimental archaeology.

As a topic, I suggest to experience caravan trails by using archaeological sites and materials. For example, tourists may experience the ancient trails from Bat to al-Mysar. A joining exhibition is also recommended.

3.2. Site reconstructions/construction (on site/off site).
I think it depends on the type of site, its condition, and its developing plan. At the site of Ras al-Jinz, there are Umm Nar graves. By comparing similar graves from the same period we might be able to reconstruct some of the graves within the site.

- Section Four: Public Interpretation in the Sultanate of Oman

4.1. Is public interpretation important for archaeological sites in the Sultanate of Oman? Why?
For sure, because we need it and for the moment there are no interpreted sites.

4.2. Do you think that the past is presented properly to the public through on-site/in situ interpretation in the Sultanate of Oman?
Not developed.

4.3. Do you think that the past is presented properly to the public through off-site interpretation such as museums, exhibitions, and public media?
Not existed.
4.4. How would you describe the current public interpretation of archaeological sites in the Sultanate of Oman?
Very weak.

4.5 From your experience, would you say that the general public is interested in archaeology in the Sultanate of Oman?
Sure they are; however, the problem is that archaeology is not a common discipline among Omanis except for few people who have heard of Magan, but they haven’t experience it in physical sense.

4.6. From your point of view, what are the main constraints/ issues that face public interpretation of archaeological sites in the Sultanate of Oman? Are there any examples you would like to provide?

a. -There are no national specialists, except for a limited number from the mid 90s. There is increasing awareness among Omani archaeologists.

b. There is no financial support. People who are in charge do not consider archaeology as a priority, and as essential resource for Omani heritage. From my research experience in Adam in the vernacular architecture, the Municipality of Adam destroyed many historical quarters in order to build modern structures. People who are in charge have no idea about the Royal Decree of NHPL1980.

c- Archaeologists are not involved in developing committees.
d- Archaeological sites restoration and sustainability are not a priority.

4.17. In your opinion, what are the most important steps needed to develop public interpretation of archaeological sites in the Sultanate of Oman?

Employing Omani archaeologists and training them properly.
Outreaching programs to the public.
Promotional programs and activities in relation to archaeological tourism.

4.18. How would you describe the role of public interpretation in archaeological sites sustainability?
The current situation shows that visitors pick up some archaeological materials from archaeological sites. One main reason for this is that there is no awareness because there is no interpretation. Interpretation must be done carefully and we have to set regulation for visitors.

Interpreting and promoting an archaeological site does not necessarily mean protection, it could be the opposite. So it is important to guide people and manage their visits properly to ensure the safety of the presented sites, especially fragile areas. Interpretation must play a dual role in every site; promotion and protection. Visiting policies are important.
4.19. What would you suggest are good examples of on-site interpretation in the Sultanate of Oman?

Al-Balid, Ras al-Hadd, Ras al-Jinz, Ras al-Hamra, Wadi Indam

4.20. What would you think are bad examples of on-site interpretation in the Sultanate of Oman?

As an archaeologist, I can not consider any site as a bad example.

4.21. Are there any examples of sites which are currently not interpreted, but you think should be interpreted as a high priority? Why?

Wadi Indam is a very good example and new excavated sites. There are a lot of excavated materials. The accessibility to the site is little bit difficult, but this problem can be easily overcome.

Bar al-Jassah is a practical example since the area has already been developed.

I recommend also the site of Ras al-Jinz.

4.22. Are there some sites which you do think should NOT be interpreted in the Sultanate of Oman?

Qalhat, is a very important site, but we should not do any interpretation until we conduct a systematic archaeological fieldworks. Our current knowledge is very little.

The previous archaeological works were done by non-specialists unfortunately.

The Jew cemetery must be interpreted; it is part of Oman’s history.

4.23. In your opinion, is it important to have public interpretation for archaeological sites in every region or local area in the Sultanate of Oman? Why?

It is very important. I think archaeological works should be divided equally and systematically among all areas in Oman instead of concentrating in few sites.

I prefer that each Wilayat develops its own archaeological sites. At the national level, there must be priorities; some sites deserve urgent work than others because of their special situations.

4.24. Which interpretive methods would you recommend for remote sites?

For those remote sites which are located far from Muscat they must be interpreted and promoted more because tourists like to go in adventures rather than staying in the Capital. Some remote sites must not be interpreted at all for tourists.

4.25. Do you think that we can develop archaeological tourism in the Sultanate of Oman?

There is no doubt about it. Oman is very rich archaeologically. Many archaeological sites are located in developed and attractive areas; many of them can be positively promoted.
- Section Five: Recommendations

5.1. Are there any themes that would you like to be developed through archaeological sites; e.g. copper mining trails, caravan trails?

As I mentioned before that people hear and read about Magan, but they haven't experienced it through off site or on-site interpretations. I suggest documentary films, TV shows and other media. Also, it can be interpreted through various archaeological sites in both inland and coastal areas. This is in addition to the presentation and interpretation of the role of Magan in the ancient world.

5.2. What recommendations would you make in relation to archaeological site development in relation to the public interpretation (e.g. facilities, security, staff, registration)?

Creating systematic archaeological databases for all sites in Oman is very essential in any developing plan. Archaeological sites should be linked to other development plans. For example, at the site of Bawshar, our plan first is to create databases systematically. As I said, these databases contain all information about the site, archaeology, environment, geology, ethnography, and so on. The Ministry of Heritage and Culture should coordinate with the Ministry of Housing in order to prevent any further misuse of those areas with archaeological sites, as well as to avoid any future conflict between the government and the public.

Promotion is very important either at the national or international level. Private sectors must play an essential role in archaeological sites development.

5.5. Are you aware of any studies or documents related to the topic of public interpretation in relation to the Sultanate of Oman or United Arab Emirates?

Not in relation to the Oman and Emirates.

5.6. Is there anything else which you would like to tell me about in relation to public interpretation of archaeological sites in the Sultanate of Oman?

I suggest that you involve the public in your research.
Public Interpretation of Archaeological Heritage and Archaeotourism in Oman

Code: AS9
Type of Interview: Structured (Arabic)
Date: 19/01/2006

The Aim:
The public interpretation refers to the presentation of archaeological sites and findings to the non-specialists such as tourists, school parties and local communities through various interpretive media such as guided trails, tours guides, on-site exhibition, audio/video tours and panels. The focus of this research is the critical issue of archaeological site interpretation to the public in the Sultanate of Oman. Interpretation is considered essential to the achievement of a myriad of values, including educational, economic, social and cultural values. One major aim for public interpretation is to enliven archaeological sites, as well as sustaining their environment for present and future generations.

I have specially selected archaeological interpretation experts and I hope you will be willing to complete the survey. The survey comprises open-ended questions that should enable you to provide as much detail as you feel you want to in your responses. I would like to thank you for your valuable concern and your help in advance. I should mention that all information that you provide is confidential and used for this research only. Please let me know if you have any queries in relation to this survey.

Thank you for your help.

Yaqoub Al-Busaidi
PhD. Candidate
University of Wales Institute, Cardiff
E-Mail: albusaidi55@yahoo.com or yabusaid@squ.edu.om

- Section One: Personal Details:

Name:
Position:
Institution:
Specialty:
Nationality (optional):

Section Two: Fieldwork experience in the Sultanate of Oman (Please move to the Section Three if you do not have fieldwork experience in the Sultanate of Oman).
4. From your fieldwork experience in the Sultanate of Oman:

2.1. What fieldwork experience do you have in the Sultanate of Oman?
1. Ras al-Jinz with the French-Italian expedition;
2. Manal for two seasons;
3. al-Balid;
4. Rescue archaeological works, Bawshar, Mahlayiah in Wadi Indam (ca. 90 graves), Rijlah (Rustaq);
   Most archaeological sites that I worked at are graves;
5. I worked on the project of ‘the National Heritage List’ which aims to list and register significant archaeological sites in the Sultanate of Oman, e.g., Qalhat, Shir, Arja, Bawshar and many forts and castles.

2.2 What do you think of the location and accessibility of your site?
It depends on the site.

2.3. How about the archaeological significance and scale of excavation?
Most of my experience is based on salvage archaeology and not oriented excavations because we don’t receive any students as it used to be. The methodology of rescue archaeology is different from the oriented one in regard to work order and process. There are sites of a national significance such as Arja, al-Blaid and Wadi Safafir.

2.4. What are the opportunities for generating income from visitors to your ongoing dig or after?
In order to generate income, first, there should be visible attractive features and a good interpretation so visitors benefit from their visit and enjoy it as much as possible. If there is a possibility to restore sites, this will be even better in order to make site more understandable and preserved. Some ancient graves at the site of Bawsher, for instance, can be restored, clarified and prepared for tourists.

I recommend that large-scale sites, such as Wadi Indam and Qalhat, to be conserved, restored and to make them accessible, provide facilities and create some gift shops. This is happening at many forts and castles that are managed by the Ministry of Tourism. If we are not able to do so, then I suggest the building of a museum that presents various archaeological sites. At least, this might help in boosting archaeological tourism. Archaeological sites are different from forts and castles in a sense that each archaeological site has its own artefacts, environment and landscape, story, meanwhile, most forts and castles look alike.

2.5. What ways would you think of to provide more specialist services for specialist groups?
For sure, I expect specialists are more knowledgeable than the average tourists. It would be much easier to explain archaeological process, terms and the digging techniques at the site for the specialists who are expected to ask in details questions about the site, materials, pre-excavations, during the excavations and after the excavations works. The average tourist would be interested in basic information about the site and archaeological works provided that they are presented to him/her in enjoyable ways.
2.6. What sources of practical help and financial support would you recommend for the site interpretation?

1- Private sector,
2- Financial subsidiaries in order to promote archaeological sites by the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Heritage and Culture.
3- An interdisciplinary committee includes various specialists, including archaeologists, architects, tourism experts, photographers, surveyor, etc.

2.7. How about promoting the site and working with the media?
The media was not there, except for the sites of Manal and Bawshar. The local papers exaggerated in presenting Manal, knowing that it is only a normal archaeological excavation. The papers published about Bawshar because the archaeological expedition was a joint project between the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, not because of the importance of the site. There is no continuous support for public archaeology from the media in Oman, all news about archaeological sites were momentary and for once. The case of the site of Ras al-Hamra has not been presented to the public.

2.8. Please comment on the public reaction, curiosity, and involvement in your excavation.
People were interested in helping and providing us with the best support they could give. Some of them brought pictures of archaeological sites that have not been surveyed before such as in Izki. We got a lot of people at the sites who want to see them and the new excavated materials.

On the other hand, at the site of Mahalliyah, we got some people who were thinking that we were digging for gold. Other people were against excavations because of the exhumation for some skeleton. There is no awareness. I think it is a good idea to invite people to participate in ongoing archaeological excavations in one way or another; however, we must consider archaeological sites security. The public involvement will raise their awareness about the site in particular and about archaeology in general.

2.9. What about the recreational pattern in the area – is it in an area which is popular with tourists, or day visitors interested in heritage or is it an area which has only local residents?

It depends on the location of the site. For example, Qalhat and Ras al-Hadd are two active and strategic sites where you can find natural and cultural attractions. Shir is also a great remote site to be visited. Arja is not really active or attractive for the moment.

2.10. In regard to the duration – is the site opened for a short-term, seasonal, or year-round and on going?

Short-term depending on various circumstances; for instance, the weather is a very important element in archaeological fieldworks in the Sultanate of Oman. It is really difficult to work in the summer. We did it once at the site of Rjailah in Rustaq.
2.11. In relation to the site, do you think that on-site interpretation is of interest of further education class or community?
Yes it is.

2.12. Do you think that the sites are adequately promoted?
No, I have not come across any interpreted or promoted site.

2.13. Have you been with your family, relatives, and friends to any of the archaeological sites?
No, I have not, because I don’t think that they would be interested in archaeological ruins without any interpretation, not attractive. Most archaeological sites are not for visiting, but for archaeological works.

- Section Three: Interpretation Methods

3.1. What do you think of the following interpretation methods for archaeological sites in the Sultanate of Oman:

1. Experimental archaeology (on site/off site).
It could be used at some archaeological sites. For example, you can design burials or funeral customs with related materials.

3.2. Site reconstructions/construction (on site/off site).
I suggest the creation of 3D digital reconstructions and natural-size models from the same materials at Bat, Qalhat and Bawshar.

- Section Four: Public Interpretation in the Sultanate of Oman

4.1. Is public interpretation important for archaeological sites in the Sultanate of Oman? Why?
For sure, it is important because it is difficult to understand archaeological sites without interpretation, especially for non-specialists. There must be interpretive tools. Also, it depends on visitors’ profile, i.e. age, education, purpose of visit. So, here interpretation provides the opportunities for all people to communicate with the site. Interpretation creates sense of pride and raise awareness among the public. Moreover, it is an educational tool for teachers and necessary for tourists.

4.2. Do you think that the past is presented properly to the public through on-site/in situ interpretation in the Sultanate of Oman?
No, I don’t think so. The main focus is forts and castles. The history of mining in Oman is theoretically known to some extent, but it is not interpreted through physical evidence.

4.3. Do you think that the past is presented properly to the public through off-site interpretation such as museums, exhibitions, and public media?
There is no renovation. There is no national archaeological museum. Although the stores at the Ministry of Heritage and Culture are packed with archaeological materials, there are no exhibitions, temporal or permanent, to show the new excavated sites and their materials.
4.4 From your experience, would you say that the general public is interested in archaeology in the Sultanate of Oman?
Yes, they are; however, there is not much available to learn about archaeology or archaeological sites in Oman. There are some people who keep asking me different questions about archaeological excavations and the nature of our job. Also, there are those people who link archaeology to grave digging and bone collectors. This is a common impression among many people. However, there are some people who are really curious and interested.

5.2. From your point of view, what are the main constraints/ issues that face public interpretation of archaeological sites in the Sultanate of Oman? Are there any examples you would like to provide?
Financial resources are very limited;
Many people who are in charge do not appreciate archaeological sites as an important national resources;
Bureaucracy; and
Few trained experts.

5.3. In your opinion, what are the most important steps needed to develop public interpretation of archaeological sites in the Sultanate of Oman?
Site classification and registration to select sites with priorities for interpretation;
Attractive facilities and infrastructure;
Promotion.

5.4. How would you describe the role of public interpretation in archaeological sites sustainability?
Till now this concept is not developed in Oman.

5.5. What would you suggest are good examples of on-site interpretation in the Sultanate of Oman?
Bawshar, Qalhat, Bat, Shir, Ras al-Jinz

5.6. What would you think are bad examples of on-site interpretation in the Sultanate of Oman?
Manal, because there is not much to show; maybe in the future, but not now.

4.10. Are there any examples of sites which are currently not interpreted, but you think should be interpreted as a high priority? Why?
Bat is a priority. Its archaeological features are visible.

a. Are there some sites which you do think should NOT be interpreted in the Sultanate of Oman?
No, I can not think of any.
b. In your opinion, is it important to have public interpretation for archaeological sites in every region or local area in the Sultanate of Oman? Why?

It is recommended.

c. Which interpretive methods would you recommend for remote sites?

There should be a cooperative effort among all governmental sectors to facilitate accessibility to archaeological sites.

d. How do you see the relationship between the public interpretation and education in the Sultanate of Oman?

They are connected. In Oman, there are a lot of gaps in teaching history in schools through archaeology. Many periods are not included in the school curricula. The ancient history of Oman is briefly taught to the school students. I suggest that we start from the fifth grade to teach pupils about archaeological sites and link them to historical facts. Also, it is important to present archaeological sites through attractive reading, audiovisual and learning-by-doing materials, as well as programs and activities. There should be some kind of coordination between the Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Heritage and Culture and the Ministry of Education. I suggest that some images for archaeological sites and findings to be printed on school stationeries and books.

e. In the Sultanate of Oman, how do you see the opportunity to establish archaeological tourism?

Oman is endowed with various archaeological sites which are located in different geographic regions, e.g. the inland, mountainous and coastal sites. Visiting archaeological sites can be part of adventure tourism; however, archaeological tourism can not be boosted till we develop our archaeological sites for visitors.

Section Five: Recommendations

5.1. What recommendations would you make in relation to archaeological site development in relation to the public interpretation (e.g. facilities, security, staff, registration)?

I hope there will be:

1- A national archaeological team in the future;
2- Regional centres to protect archaeological sites;
3- Trained Omani experts

a. Are you aware of any studies or documents related to the topic of public interpretation in relation to the Sultanate of Oman or United Arab Emirates?

No, I am not.
5.7. Is there anything else which you would like to tell me about in relation to public interpretation of archaeological sites in the Sultanate of Oman?

1- I suggest on-road panels nearby archaeological sites which give basic information about the site. Some warning panels are posted far from the real site or in a place where the site is invisible. This misplacing might expose some site to be destroyed by vehicles or people because many people think that archaeology means forts and towers only.

2- Benefiting from the best available interpretive methods and tools and apply them to selected sites in Oman, e.g. 3D reconstruction.

3- Interpretation must be renewed and designed in a way that attracts visitors repeatedly.

4- The establishment of archaeological studies centre either independently managed or supervised by the Ministry of Heritage and Culture. It should have its own financial resources.

5- Publishing archaeological studies to the public.

6- Seminars, lectures, conferences. In the present, there are only seasonal reports.
Appendix 4B: Unstructured Interview

Public Interpretation of Archaeological Heritage and Archaeotourism in Oman

Code: AU6
Date:
Place:

Type of Interview: Unstructured (English)

The Aim:
The public interpretation refers to the presentation of archaeological sites and findings to the non-specialists such as tourists, school parties and local communities through various interpretive media such as guided trails, tours guides, on-site exhibition, audio/video tours and panels. The focus of this research is the critical issue of archaeological site interpretation to the public in the Sultanate of Oman. Interpretation is considered essential to the achievement of a myriad of values, including educational, economic, social and cultural values. One major aim for public interpretation is to enliven archaeological sites, as well as sustaining their environment for present and future generations.

I have specially selected archaeological interpretation experts and I hope you will be willing to complete the survey. The survey comprises open-ended questions that should enable you to provide as much detail as you feel you want to in your responses. I would like to thank you for your valuable concern and your help in advance. I should mention that all information that you provide is confidential and used for this research only. Please let me know if you have any queries in relation to this survey.

Thank you for your help.

Yaqoub Al-Busaidi
PhD. Candidate
University of Wales Institute, Cardiff
E-Mail: albusaidi55@yahoo.com or yabusaid@squa.edu.om

- Section One: Personal Details:

Name: Position:

Institution: Specialty:

Nationality (optional):

1- What fieldwork experience do you have in the Sultanate of Oman?
I have become interested in tourism in Oman since 1997.
2- How do you describe the relationship between archaeological tourism and public interpretation in the Sultanate of Oman?
The first thing in anything that is new is you have to build awareness. To educate people to appreciate what they have in their land. Doing that is a quite major work, because you will start from scratch. We still observe our traditions. We still observe who we are. Matter of appreciating archaeological sites is very important to start from scratch because as the older people are dying, this will go away. It is very important that we revive our traditional history; in Oman crafts are dying out.

3- Do you think that tourist guidance is well developed in the Sultanate of Oman?
No, but give them a chance.

4- What do you suggest to develop the tourist guidance in Oman?
Training Omanis people, every region must have its own tourist guides. This will give more accountability and stewardship to particular people to be in charge of a specific area. A local tour guide is more aware of their living heritage or archaeological sites around the area. This will benefit the locals from tourism development.

5- What do you think of the advantage of archaeological tourism in the Sultanate of Oman?
We have a great raw materials for tourism, we must benefit from them as much as we can
Appendices

Appendix 4C: Semi-Structured Interviews

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- **Section One: Personal Details:**

  - **Name:**  
  - **Position:**

  - **Institution:**  
  - **Specialty:**

  **Nationality (optional):**

- **Section Two: Fieldwork experience in the Sultanate of Oman** (Please move to the Section Three if you do not have fieldwork experience in the Sultanate of Oman).
2- From your fieldwork experience in the Sultanate of Oman:

2.1. What fieldwork experience do you have in the Sultanate of Oman?

I worked in al-Hamra
I did a survey in the whole of the area.
I excavated as well in Tiwi Salim. I was interested in choosing small sites that would close a gap in the knowledge we had at that time.

2.2. Please comment on the public reaction, curiosity, and involvement in your excavation.

It depends on what I was finding. At Tawi Salim it was alright while people didn’t recognize that was a burial, but there was a secondary burial in one tomb and people could see that was a skeleton...I lost my labour force.

- Section Three: Interpretation Methods

3- What do you think of the following interpretation methods for archaeological sites in the Sultanate of Oman?

(a). Experimental archaeology (on site/off site).

No, I don’t think anything of it. It’s a modern idea that’s ok in Britain where they know the structure. You need a lot to know before you start experimenting. You need much more knowledge before you start experimental archaeology. I mean over here experimental archaeology came into fashion when we knew what we had and then we were asking questions that occurred the result of our excavations and the knowledge we have acquired. You still need to know much more about your archaeological background. Otherwise it is rather a waste of time.

(b). Site reconstructions/construction (on site/off site).

At Tiwi Salim, I don’t think so. I wouldn’t recommend it. No, because if people go down to have a look at them they can see in the ground what they are...You don’t want to waste money...On the other hand, who is going to make the journey right down to Tiwi Salim? You can have a small museum adjacent to the site with models. With electronic guide the people can go and walk around.

- Section Four: Public Interpretation in the Sultanate of Oman

4.1. Is public interpretation important for archaeological sites in the Sultanate of Oman? Why?

You can not generalize; there are certain sites that people can see exactly what they are. People like to be told of what they are looking at, because you are talking down to them, people don’t like that. You got to get yourself into them. The public would be interested if the government is going to found archaeology either in the universities or in the museums. It is basic [the public interpretation].

4.2. In your opinion, what are the most important steps needed to develop public interpretation of archaeological sites in the Sultanate of Oman?
First, you want to get over in the school, the education world level. What the past is and how it is represented in your country. So that young people who will have more of interest from the over generation will go out and have a look at sites.

You must also try if there is an interest of your school teachers. Get them to take the children around to the museums...to look at the exhibit, to give the children a questionnaire to look at various questions which will make the children look and see. So at the moment in Ras al-Khaimah, children go to museums and al-Ain...

I don’t know how much of the site is still exist (Tiwi Silim). You need to have a plan and brief explanation of what people are looking at. Tell them what they are, they are not just a heap of stones; it’s a burial. Tell them what the age if they able to read the story that you can make up about it based on the published resources. It is easier to interpret the past to the public with cast, costumes or forms. People from all ages and nationalities will be interested in that staff.

5.2. How would you describe the role of public interpretation in archaeological sites sustainability?
You have to ask an expert, I am an archaeologist not a museum person.

5.3. What would you think are bad examples of on-site interpretation in the Sultanate of Oman?
You would know better than I because I haven’t been there since the 80s. You may have a lot to show at Ras al-Hadd. You got interesting villages and different architectural techniques in Ja’alan and Ibra.

There is the historical aspect; you look at your history and what did they represent, turning points in the history of this country. They got to be understandable; they got to be attractive; they got to be easily interpreted particularly the castles; people always like castles.

5.4. In your opinion, is it important to have public interpretation for archaeological sites in every region or local area in the Sultanate of Oman? Why?
No, you got to use common sense. If there is only one site of minimal interest in the area forget it. If there are sites in a certain area that have a potential interesting to people who may want to come to that area, even the local know what it is. In Ibra, for example, there are a plenty of prehistoric areas around there such as Bat. You should have a little note about cemeteries or tombs, different types of tombs. They are barely discovered and a gain a plan showing the site. You got the fort...and then there is the village itself.

5.5. Which interpretive methods would you recommend for remote sites?
I wouldn’t bother with them..., if there is a professional archaeologist who wants to go, help him to get there, but to the general tourist...no, because he is not going to appreciate what he is looking at if he hasn’t gotten any background to understand it. Why should you take the local trouble, money, time to help somebody is not going to be worth helping.
5.6. How do you see the relationship between the public interpretation, archaeological tourism and local community in the Sultanate of Oman?

Unless the locals who run the spot are enthusiastic and care about their monuments, you can’t tell everyone to look after everything. So talk to the locals to get interested and if there is one person who can be encouraged until they think he can be in charge of the site. Then when a tourist comes, he could be provided with a few notes about the area.

5.7. In the Sultanate of Oman, how do you see the connection between the public interpretation and archaeological tourism?

Well, for tourism you got to look at the practical issues. Which site is going to be the best to show to the public because they don’t want to spend time travelling to all sites when they only got ten days. So you have to plan overall and think: are you going to divide tourists among certain regions, different regions around Nizwa; you got plenty to show them there of various periods. Don’t think of it in a national level, [start regional], because that is too big start list.

5.8. Do you think that archaeological sites in the Sultanate of Oman can be developed for touristic purposes?

Oh yes; providing you go for top level expensive tourism. It is not a country that I would recommend to go for packaged charts because you got the wrong type of people, who only want to drink. They will horrify the local people and they won’t have the money. You need a tourist who is prepared to spend because they are interested in coming to learn about your culture. The lower level, I mean I may sound snobbish, but they will not come because they take quite a lot for their package and their flight and they will want to save the rest to drink [I mean the mass tourist]

5.9. How often you get people asking you about archaeology in Oman?

Yes, I did encourage them.

4.11. What are the main weakness of public interpretation in the Sultanate of Oman?

You haven’t gotten enough archaeologists yet, because who otherwise is going to interpret.

4.12. What are the main Strengths of public interpretation in the Sultanate of Oman?

The existence of an independent institution in relation to the national heritage. I remember when I went down to Tiwi Salim, the big rock outcrop, I was terrified to find French who were working on the road construction. They are taking away half of the tombs on one side of that rock outcrop with the same time that I was working on other excavations of tombs. No men from the Department of Antiquities were trying to stop them. That was in the 70s. It is minimal, not only in Oman, but here [Britain] also. You got to build it up
- Section Five: Recommendations

5.1. What recommendations would you make in relation to archaeological site development in relation to the public interpretation?
First of all if I am going to a national museum I would want to look at the finds and the plans of the site. I would want to be able to see details about what is going on in that region. If I go to a small/local museum next to an antiquity all I need is a brief note giving its name, who excavated it, what it is and its stages. And I need to see a plan...photographs of the excavations at various stages in the excavations. I want to see what it looks like when it was a heap of stone. Then when they started excavations; what did they find? I want to see what the find were?

You got to make the locals feel that those monuments are of important to them personally.

a. Are you aware of any studies or documents related to the topic of public interpretation in relation to the Sultanate of Oman or United Arab Emirates?
No, I am not.

5.8. Is there anything else which you would like to tell me about in relation to public interpretation of archaeological sites in the Sultanate of Oman?
Look at your site and say will the public is going to fall into deep trenches if an excavation is going on we want to protect the public? You also got to think of the locals

You can not compare Britain to Oman because you haven’t got the same social structure, or archaeology which was built on country societies and mature elite; the upper classes were interested in the 18th/19th centuries. All counties archaeological societies stated from the 19th century onwards. Museums through the country came into beings at that time. You got another hundred years to catch up. Look from the size side of your country, you haven’t done very much yet. The Department of Antiquity could do much work.

5.9. What you think of the current state of public interpretation for Magan civilization?
I don’t think you can focus on that because to the average visitors or the person here, nothing has called Magan...if you go out and say to a member of the public: What you think of Magan? ...haa [doesn’t know]. You have to realize that no one has heard of it; very few people know anything about the Sultanate of Oman. You got to tell them.

What you need is a main museum; the main museums are in Muscat. I don’t know where else you got museums at the moment. Also, the school text books

5.5. What do you think of archaeology as entertainment business?
I don’t like that because it gives the false impression. I mean in Time Team on the television. They go on into a site, they work away, and in the weekend they have the answer. The public don’t know the whole lot of research which has been done before they get to the site. When they have the finds...it’s a false impression.
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  Name:  
  Position:  
  Institution:  
  Specialty:  
  Nationality (optional):

Section Two: Fieldwork experience in the Sultanate of Oman (Please move to the Section Three if you do not have fieldwork experience in the Sultanate of Oman).
4. From your fieldwork experience in the Sultanate of Oman:

2.1. What fieldwork experience do you have in the Sultanate of Oman?
First time I came in Oman, it was in 1977. In 1978, I made a survey of the copper occurrences of Oman that could have been used in prehistoric time. At that time, I was excavating in Buraime, in UAE. We were making a survey of copper ores that could have been used in Sur. So, we made surveys of ancient copper mines in Iran, Afghanistan and in Oman because Oman was supposed to be the Magan copper of Mesopotamian texts and this is what we demonstrated. At Ras al-Jinz we started excavations with Tosi in 1984/85.

2.2. What do you think of the location and accessibility of your site?
We used driving on dirt road, which some of them were very tough. Now, we have asphalted road, brand-new going from Sur and from Alashkarah direct to here. So, accessibility is OK. Now the site is in a turtle reserve which is operated as far as I understand by the Ministry of Regional Municipalities and Environment and this mainly aimed at turtles. This is a place where people should get explanation that this is not only natural but also cultural and we got many projects been discussed in the last 10 years. And of course now things are going on and we hope the people to build a museum in which things presented in two ways; one is with photographs and texts and so on. Also, some objects which are presently belong to the Department of Antiquities, can be displayed here...

So, we have two big sites which are RJ2 and RJ1. RJ2 is the one below; it is a mud brick site and this is very fragile. What we used to do is after every year of excavation we covered it with dirt, because it is the best way to preserve it, the only way to preserve it. There are many studies all around the world about how to preserve the mud brick but most of them failed. What we should do and what we have been asked to do by the Ministry of Heritage is to prepare this year for a reconstruction of the houses we excavated just nearby the site. We are now reopening the site to make or finish the plan. We already have the plan, but we want to check some details and we have already selected a place where we can rebuild these houses. The problem is that these houses should be rebuilt only on the condition that there will be a permanent care for them. We all know that mud brick architecture is very fragile, the weather is not always very nice, heavy winds, sometime heavy rains and this is very damageable for the houses. There should be a proper care for the house full year.

For the higher part RJ1 which is preserved as it was except few excavations we made; it is preserved as it was 4000 years ago. Then we excavated one house on the edge and this has been determined as Wadi Suq house, ca. 2000 BC. Then we have excavated there mainly grave of Umm an-Nar type of 2500 B.C. So, what we would like to have is at the same time steps to reach; I would not recommend making the steps on the path we use to go because this path is 4000 years old and if we have too many tourists going through there this is maybe damageable and this is not such an easy track. We may have to build some real steps. What we should do in that case is to have a pathway on the top where people should walk and not walk elsewhere. Of course, this is a very specialized tourism, not all people who would like to see that. The houses are ok and inside the
houses we can put some photographs of the objects where were found inside each room. We do hope that this will be done in the next 2 or 3 years.

I think we have already recommended the Ministry, even the preceding Minister, His Highness Sayid Faisal. We wrote him a letter says that this should be included in the World Heritage both from a natural and cultural side. This area says all what is east of mountain of Jabal Khamis, south of Sur and north of Wadi al Batha; it is a fabulous place for cultural heritage.

2.3. Is the suggested houses will be the same as the original one?

Well, we will try that, same size, same period, same plan, the same type of construction. We know the type of construction. Every one of the students here with me is working on that; on this mud brick and there is a specialist for this kind of things. Now, after that, the roofing, but basically we don’t know from here, but we have excavations from Iran for instance, 3rd millennium B.C. They show that the roofing was made nothing very spectacular like it was made in ancient houses Oman, the beams, the mats and the earth...So we can be confident that this will be close to the reality. The thing that we really don’t know is how high the wall, but you can imagine, just to show...

2.4- How about the archaeological significance and scale of excavation?

In my opinion this site [Ras al-Jinz] and the sites in Ras al-Hadd are really significant not only at the level of the history of Oman, but at international level. Ras al-Hadd and this part are places where since 4500 years the Omani people of that time were trading with India. This has been the place, from which the Arab sailors went to China from which they even converted these areas to Islam in Indonesia. There are those people who moved Islam to Indonesia. This is a very important place for the history of the Arab and the history of mankind. It is a very very important place. Most people wouldn’t know about Babylon, and so on. It is quite difficult to tell the people that this is really a very important place, but each time I show this to some of my colleague thaeysay: ‘WOW’. It is a very important site. What we did is only part of what has to be done? There are remains for the next generation, but I do hope that we can continue for some time.

2.5- What are the opportunities for generating income from visitors to your ongoing dig or after?

I think, this is already included in cultural heritage parts. The thing is that there should be a local museum. There is a kind of cultural centre, visitor centre where everything about the turtles will be presented and so on. Archaeological findings should be presented at the same time...this is part of the history, even of man relation. The people in Ras al-Jinz were exploiting turtles, they were killing some of them, they were having eggs and so on. These people should understand that these turtle were important resource...we are ready to provide photos. Also, the materials belong to the Department of Antiquities, but I think there is already being an agreement that the Department of Antiquities will send here not only photos, but also objects so the tourists can see them. On the other hand, this Ras al-Jinz is a single site, this should be considered also in
accordance with Ras al-Hadd and the Castle of Ras al Hadd where there should be a museum.

Obviously, tourists will pay to enter the site. This is going to be part of the management plans for this area for tourism. A lot of tourists would be interested in this cultural thing. I am sure that once properly done, but it needs a lot of investment before. It is a long term investment and sometimes expensive, but I am sure this can come along with the turtles, maybe even we can imagine that one day it will be more important than the turtles.

2.6. Do you get any school students, or visitors from the public and tourists?

Schools still, tourists we have from time to time. Actually I have seen most of the tourists don’t know about it, so they just pass and see ...and if possible and if they are interested I always give them explanations, but of course when we are not here, the site is not even visible, which has been a good protection for the site, but when we are here we welcome anybody. We have got already several times classes. I remember years ago there was a class of girls from the Ras al Hadd, secondary school. If the people want to come we welcome them. Of course I have a lot of other things to do, I can not welcome people everyday, but if curiosity comes more and more we can have one of the members of the team in charge of that work.

2.7. Do you feel that the people in Ras al Jinz are interested?

What is amusing is that they understand what we are doing; they become interested about participating in the work. For instance, some years ago we found the head of big tuna fish abandoned there in prehistoric time and they recognized that, they recognized the fishing equipments. Ten years ago, we found a Mabkharah, when they took it out they recognized it immediately, it was a mabkharah (incense burner) and one of them took it and passed it under his dishdashah in a traditional way. After that, I showed it to Sheikh Nassir al Ameri, the Sheikh of Ras al Jinz and suddenly he disappeared with the object and I screamed: ‘What is going to happen’? His son told me: ‘He is going to show it to my mother’ So, that means something may really be of interest to the local people more than we may think.

2.8. This leads me to ask about the importance of ethno-archaeology in interpretation?

We do it already. We made a lot of work with that. Some years ago, at the begging of the project actually, we got British ethnographer William Lane Caster, who made one of the most classical books on Bedouins in Jordan and he came here and he went all around. He wrote things for us which been published in scientific journals and we have used that to interpret our data. This is extremely important. Most of our reconstructions for the society we have done depend on ethnography. For instance, fishing, two years ago we had meetings with local fishermen and they explained a lot of techniques to us, and this is to understand what was in the past and they were very interested in our data to.
In the 4th millennium B.C., they made fish hooks not from metal, but from shells of oyster and these hooks we always felt maybe they were not useful because they were almost closed and the fishermen said: ‘no, no, no it is very good for tuna fish’. We have learned a lot of things from them. I think the way of life of this part of Ja’alan basically is preserved until modern time. Now, we are in the village of Ras al Jinz where there are stone houses. When we arrived here there was no one stone house, everybody was living in barasti. Then the first stone house was that of the Sheikh and after that all wanted to live in stone houses, because people don’t stay here all the year, they are seasonal. These people who we excavated were seasonal too, ethno-archaeology is very important to understand, it will be a way to explain to people that the past is important, because they will recognize their own way of life in the past.

2.9- What sources of practical help and financial support would you recommend for the site interpretation?

At the moment, all excavations are paid mainly by France and Italy, but we already got some sponsor from the Ministry of Heritage in terms of provide housing in Muscat and one or two cars for a season and some workmen. We would like to have more, but you know also the resources are limited. We also attracted some Omani donors. For instance, yesterday I came here with a car fully loaded with milk, water and other staff that were given by Omani sponsors. This is the kind of help we need for our work. They just do it because they think what we are doing is interesting, so the more interest is raised, the more support we get. Now, of course interpreting the data of archaeological sites is something which is very wide, so what we would like to have is more geological information and aerial pictures.

Now modern archaeology is really relying on satellite images. Basically, we have, but we would like Oman National Survey Authority to be more involved in what we are doing. We are ready to give all the data, we have made GIS, but the maps, the classical maps 1:100,000, of this area have been done quite long time ago. For example, we know that this grave is on the top of the hill and when we look it in the map it says it is below the hill....Now, we know that the map is the problem....I am sure that all old map must have a lot of incorrect data. We don’t ask access to secret data, it is not our goal, but anyway of entering all the sites in the general data available to that consults is extremely important for interpretation because we have made a lot of study about paleo-climate and the change of coastal lines in the last 5 and 6 millennium. It is also important that we can give back to the local authority so that they can know that this should be protected and so on.

Another thing we did with the Ministry is we have the gentlemen Khamis, son of the Sheikh, who is a very knowledgeable person, we know him since 20 years, and he has been working with us for sometimes and he is helping us in making investigations. He knows about archaeology, he is interested in archaeology, and he is now in temporary contract with the Ministry of Heritage to check archaeology here, he knows some English so he can communicate with people. He is not an archaeologist, he will never become an archaeologist, but it is important to include local people with local knowledge, knowledge of the tribal lineage. Because you will be able first to know about everything when they come and also to explain to the other people of the area
with local authority that says: ‘please do not move’, this is much better than any other administration or any archaeological safety. So we really would recommend that in these areas where you have knowledgeable people like that, they should be involved.

2.10- How about promoting the site and working with the media?

We made several papers in the press, e.g. Oman daily, Observer..., TV has never been here since long time ago, I think I got the TV interview here 20 years ago. I remember very well in fact. What we would like really like to have and has been a constant. There are now some very big companies like National Geography who are doing movies on this kind of things. I tried several times to attract them. They are interested, but they said: ‘where are the treasures, we have no treasures’. We should speak about that. There was a time with the former director with Ali al Shanfari who said: ‘I think we should go to the press’, so we wrote a paper both in Arabic and English, but the impact of that I don’t know.

We also made some public lectures almost every year we tried to do a public lecture in the Historical Society of Oman. Sayid Faisla invited us to make a lecture at the Cultural Club and there were some people who are interested. It is out of our control, the media people are not easy. There was some attraction of the media with the boat, unfortunately the first boat we built has sunk, but we will try to do something again. If you look at the books, they are all repeating the same things that we have done 20 years ago. The British team in Bisya has a lot of new data coming out.

2.11. Please comment on the public reaction, curiosity, and involvement in your excavation.

Generally speaking, it is everywhere the relation to the past is not easy. I also met people who said: ‘why are you going to excavate there’. On the other hand, there are people who are really interested. We invest a lot of public money, so we should give back some. It should be done with accordance to the country itself; there should be a constant cooperation between local medial, local institutions and us. I see more future than years ago.

People of the village are familiar with what we do...they are not afraid; they know that we have been excavating bones and all that and nothing happened. You have to do in accordance with the people if they don’t like they don’t like, but basically if they see you to do the things, they become confident after sometimes; it is ok. It is interesting for them to see how we are processing this. Archaeology is very tractive to people, but very often it is mixed with treasures and so on. They should be aware of fact when we said something about the people in the past, it is grounded to some evidence. We can give an access for a short stay for people from secondary schools. They can come, excavate and stay with us.
2.12- Do you think that the site is adequately promoted?

No. this is not a critique, it is just the fact. We hope that in the future when you come here and see no site they said what the story of the site is. So, if we make the houses, the museums, they will understand.

- Section Three: Interpretation Methods

3- What do you think of the following interpretation methods for archaeological sites in the Sultanate of Oman:

3.1- Experimental archaeology (on site/off site).

The Magan boat was a scientific experimental archaeology, well it sunk, but we learned a lot of things much more, much much more than we expected from the beginning. As we want to make a new one we will probably learn more and more and this is also even if it was a disaster, it was a method to promote. It has been in all papers and in Indian Journals. The houses we want to rebuild are to some extent experimental archaeology. The next Magan project will be sponsored by France, Italy, and we hop to have some money coming from National Geography and from foreigner companies or local companies from Oman or foreigner companies in Oman.

3.2- Site reconstructions/construction (on site/off site).

This is a problem. For instance, take the Rustaq Fort, some foreign tourists say: ‘this is completely new’, so, the European people love the ruins, and most of the things that have been developed by international agencies, such as UNESCO, ICOMOS, ICROM, are a kind of rules to do preservation, but not reconstruction. Some people would prefer reconstruction. To some extent they are both rights. I don’t think to rebuild the houses on the spot because that is an archaeological site and it is not finished with excavation and it is really needed, but we have selected a place where we can reconstruct the houses. This is not a question to reconstruct the whole village but, to give an idea, people need that. These walls are too fragile; you can not build anything above them. The best thing is to leave them in the ground.

At Bat, I would not recommend to rebuild a stone tower. I think Bat should be left as it is. Some of the tombs at Bat are still quite good, so that they give the real idea of what it was. So, there is no need to make a reconstruction from which we are not going to be sure. Maybe at Bat we can rebuild one. Umm al Nar tombs are nice facing stones. From the beginning, I think in the second millennium, Wadi Suq people took stones out of these graves.

- Section Four: Public Interpretation in the Sultanate of Oman

4.1. Is public interpretation important for archaeological sites in the Sultanate of Oman? Why?

Sure, it is.
4.2. Do you think that the past is presented properly to the public through on-site/in situ interpretation in the Sultanate of Oman?

Not yet. Sometimes, there has been confusion between research and presentation. There are too different things. The people who provide me with money in France, they will never provide it for presentation. They are specialized international agencies for doing presentation like UNESCO.

4.3. Do you think that the past is presented properly to the public through off-site interpretation such as museums, exhibitions, and public media?

We have given some materials for exhibitions. We have participated even with people from the Department of Antiquities. Just two years ago, there was one small exhibition made for this Magan Conference; it got good coverage from the media also; the exhibition was for three days. We made another exhibition 12 years ago in Crown Plaza in Muscat for 5 days. The problem now is that we need a national museum plus local museums. There is a small local museum in Sohar Fort. There is the Omani Museum near the Ministry of Information belongs to the Ministry of Heritage. There have been a lot of improvement, but the archaeological materials still the same from the excavations from the early 70s. You need a real National Museum. For example, the mabkharah which is highly significant, where is it? It is in a box in the Department of Antiquities. I have seen some people who say: ‘ok you take these objects to your country and we don’t have them’. Well I said ‘I am sorry the objects are back into the Department of Antiquities. We never took except for analyses.

One main problem is the lack of facilities which is very important. There should be an exhibition travelling across Europe and the States, e.g. Magan. We have already contacted some of the major museums in Paris, Greece; we can do that. The Metropolitan Museum of Arts in New York has initially agreed, in Italy, in Rome, in Venice, German museums, and the British Museum. So what should be done is a travelling exhibition that should be an occasion to take the materials out of the boxes, to restore them, to prepare them, and this why the national museum is under preparation. This should go around Europe.

4.4. From your experience, would you say that the general public is interested in archaeology in the Sultanate of Oman?

Very interested; people here have not been educated for archaeology. This takes time; it comes slightly in the text books, in the school. It has been everywhere like that in my country too.

4.5 From your point of view, what are the main constraints/ issues that face public interpretation of archaeological sites in the Sultanate of Oman? Are there any examples you would like to provide?

Nation museum, local museum, national inventory. You should have a national inventory. National inventory is not a small thing. The data of the Ministry of Heritage should be in GIS system. So that any ministry dealing with construction, because they don’t know and they destroy the site. A national inventory should be done. Then this
inventory should be adapted every year. The national inventory for Oman I think would employ easily 40 people... This is a real problem. Also, there is the promotion in the press; everything must be done.

4.6. In your opinion, what are the most important steps needed to develop public interpretation of archaeological sites in the Sultanate of Oman?

4.7. How would you describe the role of public interpretation in archaeological sites sustainability?

One of the problems is I think that something like fishing or trade with outside which is deeply rooted in Oman. Again, the fishermen here feel interested in what we do. Archaeology has to meet somewhere what is in the mind of people, I can not be in mind of an Omani, I will never be, but I can propose something. It is up to you to accept or reject it. Of course, by discussing with Omanis, this is the best way. Also to make a presentation of what I have in mind that will be interesting for them. There are some societies who just simply not like the past to be investigated, because the past is the gift of God. You are not allowed to change the past. This is in the main system.

4.8. What would you suggest are good examples of on-site interpretation in the Sultanate of Oman?
Ras al Jinz, Ras al Hamra, Bat, Zukayit.

4.9. Are there some sites which you do think should NOT be interpreted in the Sultanate of Oman?
The problem is that we should think at the moment in term of sites that maybe are endangered by too many tourists.

4.10. In your opinion, is it important to have public interpretation for archaeological sites in every region or local area in the Sultanate of Oman? Why?
Sure, which is important for the local community.

4.11. Which interpretive methods would you recommend for remote sites?
Shir is not a place where you can drive. The thing not to do is an asphalted road.

4.12. Do you think that archaeological tourism is bad for archaeological sites?
No as long as it is controlled and as long as people don’t plundering the site.

4.13. In your opinion what are the main problems that we are facing in interpreting Magan Culture?
Magan is a problem in general. Magan was a name given to this society by the Mesopotamian. So, now we have to figure out what was exactly Magan. We used a lot of local data. We should be careful also in the fact that Magan was in the past and the past has never looked exactly like the present. What I would really try to avoid is the
idea that Magan and Oman are the same thing. There has been a lot of historical changes. We still have a lot to learn about Magan.

4.14. What would you suggest to Interpret Magan?

4.15. Are you aware of any studies or documents related to the topic of public interpretation in relation to the Sultanate of Oman or United Arab Emirates?

There have been two or three papers one is by Daniel Potts in the conference which took place in Abu Dhabi 2003.
The Aim:
The public interpretation refers to the presentation of archaeological sites and findings to the non-specialists such as tourists, school parties and local communities through various interpretive media such as guided trails, tours guides, on-site exhibition, audio/video tours and panels. The focus of this research is the critical issue of archaeological site interpretation to the public in the Sultanate of Oman. Interpretation is considered essential to the achievement of a myriad of values, including educational, economic, social and cultural values. One major aim for public interpretation is to enliven archaeological sites, as well as sustaining their environment for present and future generations.

I have specially selected archaeological interpretation experts and I hope you will be willing to complete the survey. The survey comprises open-ended questions that should enable you to provide as much detail as you feel you want to in your responses. I would like to thank you for your valuable concern and your help in advance. I should mention that all information that you provide is confidential and used for this research only. Please let me know if you have any queries in relation to this survey.

Thank you for your help.

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- Section One: Personal Details:

Name: Position:

Institution: Specialty:

Nationality (optional):
1- How long have you been working in Oman?
16 years in Oman, from 1989.

2- Do you think that public interpretation is important for archaeological sites?
Yes, I think it is very important because I can tell that a majority of the tourists, who come to visit Oman, come with the objective of learning about the heritage, the culture and the history of this country. The heritage, the culture and the history of the country is embodied in the various heritage sites that exist in the forts, museums, tombs, and frankincense trail. That is what people come for here. So, if you have a general interpretation of archaeological and heritage sites of Oman and make clearer to the travelling public, I think it will elicit a great interest in the destination.

3- Do you think that archaeological sites in the Sultanate of Oman are well presented and interpreted?
It is well presented to the people who are very keen to know. For example, I will tell you that at Ras al-Hadd and Ras al-Jinz there is the eco-resort of the green-back turtles or Ubar, the lost city in Salalah, or for example the frankincense trail. They are only known to very few people, a few segment of the entire population of the countries who are only tourists to Oman. For example, Germany is the biggest market for Oman, but there are only a few operators who are coming from German who actually are interested following these trails. Actually, they go to Bat graves, the history of al-Busaid Dynasty, go to adventure routes cross the Wahiba Sand, and go to Ras Madrakah. Larger parts do a general tour of Oman. So, if the public interpretation of the archaeological and heritage sites of Oman are more developed, promoted and advertised and made known to the world a wide, it will lead to a greater interest in these aspects.

I don’t think they are presented properly. At Al-Hottah Cave, for example, they actually make it accessible to tourists by building a small railroad system which it doesn’t pollute the atmosphere. If you go to Ras al-Hadd/ Ras al-Jinz resort, people want to go and see the green turtles hatch and lay their eggs during the night. The accommodation available is very very minimal. The existing facilities are not up to the market. The archaeological site at Ras al-Jinz is barely visited…it is not very known.

As for the off site interpretation, Bai az-Zubair is the most popular museum which features many unique items. The Omani-French museum is also very very visited. Jibrin Museum and Nizwa Fort are definite in any tourist calendar. More than that, sites such as Bibi Miriam and Job Tomb in Salalah are lesser known.

4- Do you get people who want to go to Bat, who want to go to Ras al-Jinz just to see archaeological sites?
Yes, we do get very little request for that, and people who are seriously into this eco-tourism aspects, want only this aspect. People who do not want to stay in a five star hotel, they want to spend a week with the Bedouins for example, they want to cross Bilad Seet on a camel back or horse back, they want to live in the desert, they want to discover the people of Misfah, they want to recreate the trail that did Thesiger in the 70s. People wanna do that.
5- How would you describe the current public interpretation for archaeological sites?
I would imaging there are a lot of rooms for improvement. We need to position Oman in heritage, culture and archaeology, and natural beauty.

You see when you promote a destination you got to look at all segments of the traffic. You can’t look only at the people who are interested in winter sun and the beach or the people who want to live in five stars hotels. You have to look at all segments. I am telling you that people who are interested in ancient history, culture, heritage and archaeology are not few numbers. There are other people to whom alcohol does not mean anything. There are a lot of Europeans who do not drink a drop of alcohol and consider it as a poison to their bodies. You have to reach to the segments of the market who are interested. You have to reach them through tourist board, geological society, and the Ministry of Heritage and Culture.

6- From your experience do you think that Omani and non-Omani here in the Sultanate of Oman are interested in touring archaeology in the Sultanate of Oman?
It is a question of educating them and presents it [archaeology] in a manner which is easily understandable. Anything in history, you can make it extremely interesting or extremely boring. You have to present it in a manner which excites the mind to know more. For example, if you go to Jibrin Fort and you have a guide who is guiding you through the whole process...History is a story telling, and if you can get somebody who can tell the story in effective manner...if you present archaeological facts and data in a manner which is interesting and understood by the common man there will be a huge opportunity. We miss this in Oman. We don’t have enough people who know or talk in the profession. We are just starting this industry.

7- In relation to the tour guidance do you train Omanis and non-Omanis?
Yes we do the normal things. We have in-house program. When the traffic is not so much, our entire team who work in Bahwan Tourism go out into the field; they go, they create the itineraries and talk to the Bedouins, talk to the local people.

8- What do you think the main constraints that we have in the Sultanate of Oman in relation to the public interpretation?
We are very young in the business. It is a nesting industry. The industry is growing up from a small beginning. We are in a process of learning. Infrastructures for example, at Ras al-Hadd/Ras al-Jinz, I know that the Ministry has a very ambitious plan of developing an eco-resort on the outskirt of Ras al-Jinz and Ras al-Hadd. I am sure it will happen. It is not like we want thousands of people go to Ras al-Jinz and destroy the fine ecological balance; it has to be linked with the environment.

Infrastructure is one. The second thing is the publicity, the promotion and the positioning. Oman is not choosing what part it should take. There are many aspects of environment, in terms of the security, in terms of natural and cultural heritage, in terms of immigrations, in terms of visa regulations, in terms of accessibility, the frequency of flights. All these are contributing to the traffic coming in and the allocation of budget. We need people who will be in a responsible manner who portray the image of Oman in
the international market. All these are integrated to developing a better interest. Therefore, if you look at it a process, we are growing and developing these various contributes which are necessary to develop Oman as a destination for winter sun, for archaeological tourism, for special interest groups, for adventure, for education and for so many things. We still in Oman in learning process. The weather also is a main problem.

9- What are the main steps to overcome those mentioned issues?
OK, passage of time is very important. With modern time, technology, free flowing of information and people from every walkways of life. Passage of time itself will bring transformation and awareness. There are more Omanis who are travelling abroad than it used ten years ago.

10- What do you think of the media and archaeological tourism?
Whenever I look at the papers, e.g. the Observer, there are always supplements about the wadis, mountains, museums.

11- How about archaeological museums?
Yes, you don’t have that kind of museums.

12- How do you describe the relationship between public interpretation and sustainable tourism?
There should be a plan and program to preserve it in a manner that the next generation benefit from learning about it. It is absolutely imperative that the proper public interpretation of all archaeological and historical sites and are covered and controlled by the authority in the land to preserve that antiquity and the original contents, so it doesn’t get destroyed...like the green back turtle that come to Ras al-Jinz. So if you doing it unplanned and in unreasonable way the turtle will stop coming there, the whole habitat will get destroyed.

13- What would you see as a good example to do on-site interpretation in the Sultanate of Oman?
The lost city of Ubar is UNESCO heritage site. It is a possibility, there is a lot of interest in the Empty Quarter, Ruba al-Khali, there is a lot of people come from France, Germany, who come and travel to Ruba al-Khali.

14- what would you think as a bad-example to do on-site interpretation in the Sultanate of Oman?
I don’t think so. It is the responsibility of every government and every country to preserve, promote and perpetuate the knowledge of its natural heritage and culture and archaeology and history...Everything is not commercial, everything does not have to earn money. A certain part of national works of every country must go to preservation of its identity, of its origin, of its people, of its history, of its local community and the unit society. These have no commercial implication.
15- Do you think that it is necessary to have in every region of Oman interpreted archaeological sites for tourists?
Necessarily, because every region is different in term of its geographical features, its beauty and even in the archaeological sites. So, I would imagine that every region should be promoted to the best of its people.

16- What type of interpretation would you suggest for those remote archaeological sites?
You have to make it accessible. There are so many ways of accessing them. There are route ways that take people up to the mountain sites. The promotion is very important.

17- How do you see the relationship between public interpretation of archaeological heritage and education?
Very closely related, the students must read about it in the school curricula …archaeology must be taught at a primary school level for them to develop an interest for that.

18- What is the visitor profile of the cultural tourists?
Usually, senior citizens, + 50 years old, who are well educated, who have money, who are deeply interest in history, culture and heritage, and they are very informed. No young people.

19- Have you thought of preparing historical trails or heritage days at Bahwan Travel Agency?
We though about it, domestic tourism hold a huge opportunity also. We realized that potential domestic tourism. We have excursions and holidays programs. We got a lot of enquiries from the local residences: ‘I wanna go in a dolphin trip’, ‘I wanna go to Ras al-Jinz to see the turtles’, ‘I wanna go to the mountains, Jabal Shams’, ‘I wann go to Salalah to drive across the desert’.

19- you got special interest tourists in archaeology?
Yes, we do, for example the UK Geological Society.

20- Do you think that there is need to target a particular group of people?
Yes, most direct route to access people interest in archaeology is obviously to go to the history department at universities, to the archaeological society, the geological society, to associations and clubs which specialized in history and cultural heritage tours. You can access them in the internet; you can go to world travel affaires, and international markets.

21- How many tourist guides you have?
We have 14 tour guides, more than half of them are Omani. There is nothing like an Omani guide talk about his country. We have an Omani guide who take the German tourist in a guided tour in the Grand Mosque and speak in German. There is nothing better than that. We encouraged and sponsored some Omanis to go and study in Germany.
22- Do you conduct any survey in relation to your tourist?
We do have feasible studies to know how many came for adventure, how many came for sea and sands...

23- Are there any type of evaluation?
We go on inspection trips, al-Maha Camp, Ras al-Hadd, Wahiba Sand Camp, to see the facilities, are they appropriate for sending our clients. On the other side, we have what is called ‘feed back form’. We ask our clients to give his/her feed back about how were the facilities, e.g. did you enjoy your stay, did the guide tell you about everything? Wasn’t it a pleasant atmosphere?

24- Are there any cooperative programs between you and the Ministry of Tourism?
We are a partner to the Ministry of Tourism in very significant manner. Like, for example, the Travel Channel from the United Kingdom came to shoot a film on Oman. The Ministry makes a reference to us and we make all the arrangement for them so that they cover every aspects of the destination and real presented in the film they make. Also, we are cooperating with Sultan Qaboos University and the Travel Agency at the Dept. of Tourism.

25- What do you think of creating joining projects with other countries for example, Yemen?
Yemen is a huge destination, it is deep in history, it is just politically not stabilized. I already have enquires for a joining Omani Yemeni expedition from the biggest German company. We are very interested in promoting Oman and Yemen. I got enquires for four people on the 31 of December 2005 who are coming from Yemen to the Omani borders.