

Chapter 7

Perspectives and Prospects for Cultural Tourism in the Pasargadae Region¹

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Introduction

The Pasargadae region has the potential to substantially benefit from cultural tourism. As the World Heritage (since 2004) listed location of the royal tombs, palace structures and gardens of Cyrus the Great, Pasargadae is already a national icon with an international reputation. The renown and achievements of Persia are attractive to international and domestic visitors, but events since the 1970s, such as the nationalisation of international hotels and the war with Iraq, have hampered tourism, particularly the growth of international visitor numbers. This chapter is a case study in how these obstacles are being addressed through heritage tourism. It asks: how is the iconic status and reputation of Pasargadae being connected to regional tourism development and how is the relationship between conservation and tourism being managed?

This chapter addresses these questions through three sections. After an overview of the history of tourism in Iran, it presents tourism data to both the Pasargadae World Heritage Site and the Pasargadae region to identify tourism trends and motivations, including how visitors access the region and site. Second, a review of the international cultural tourism literature presents a framework for management of cultural tourism, identifying key elements and issues. Third, the current management of cultural tourism to Pasargadae is compared to the management framework, with an assessment of which elements are relevant and what further steps are required to facilitate the growth of a regional cultural tourism industry around the presence of the World Heritage Site. This chapter complements Chapter 3's focus on the management of Pasargadae with a focus on its engagement with tourism, and additionally assesses Pasargadae's management within the context of global expectations of tourism management. While there are overlaps between the two chapters, these are dealt with through brief summaries and cross referencing in order to avoid repetition.

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Background: Cultural Tourism Development in Iran

Iran, like many nations in the Middle-East (Timothy and Daher 2009), is a cultural tourism destination of great potential that struggles to attract a commensurate number of tourists for the experiences and sites it offers (Aref 2011, Baum and O’Gorman 2010, Butler *et al.* 2012). While even a passing knowledge of the history of Iran is enough to recognise that its political shifts have implications for tourism, the reality is more nuanced. A brief account of Iran’s recent history and its implications for tourism is a necessary frame for discussion of tourism and its management at Pasargadae.

While the elite Western explorers of other lands had been visiting Iran since before the early seventeenth century (Sherley 1613), the beginning of mass tourism coincided with the final decade of rule by the last Shah, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. Throughout the 1970s, Iran developed a profitable and safe airline and a reputation for welcoming international visitors (Baum and O’Gorman 2010).² A number of international chains had hotels in Iran, including Hilton, Hyatt, Intercontinental and Sheraton. Following the 1979 Revolution, the hotels were nationalised, renamed, and placed under the control of the *Foundation for the Oppressed and Devotees (Bonyad-e Mostazafan va Janbazan)*, or more precisely its Recreation and Tourism Organisation. Tehran became the only official gateway to Iran, limiting Air Iran’s services, and aircraft parts became more difficult to procure. War with Iraq started soon after the Revolution in 1980 and continued for eight years. Both domestic and international tourism suffered as a result of the socio-political turmoil of the Iran-Iraq war

After the election of President Khatami in 1997, international tourists began to return to Iran in larger numbers. Khatami’s promotion of a ‘dialogue among civilisations’ included a plan to increase and enhance hospitality and tourism. This included international collaboration in tourism training (Baum and O’Gorman 2010) and increased international promotion. However, in the aftermath of the September 11 2001 world trade centre attack the country’s tourism industry suffered. International press in this climate did not encourage cultural tourism.

The more conservative Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, elected in 2005, continued the policy of encouraging tourism development. Under President Ahmadinejad’s leadership, the Iran Touring and Tourism Organisation (ITTO) was merged with the Iran Cultural Heritage Organisation (ICHO) to form the Iranian Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organisation (ICHTO), which later incorporated handicrafts (ICHHTO) (Baum and O’Gorman 2010). This organisation sits under the Vice-President of Iran, indicating both the regime’s commitment and strong central control. Iran’s plans for tourism development are ambitious and include large increases in training in management and hospitality (Baum and O’Gorman 2010).

² In fact, a 1971 event to celebrate 2500 years of monarchy and including 70 international emissaries was a contributing factor to the Islamic revolution in 1979. Pasargadae was a significant inaugural location for this event (Baum and O’Gorman 2010).

From a position in 1978 when Iran was an attractive and growing international tourism destination, it has suffered from a number of what Timothy and Nyaupane call barriers for developing countries (Timothy and Nyaupane 2009).³ These include the war with Iraq, representations of Iran as a hard-line Islamic state, and travel warnings. International perceptions may once again shift with the recent election of moderate President Hassan Rouhani. Private investment has been limited by both sanctions on financial transactions and the nationalisation of assets after 1979. Human resources in Iran have also been identified as a major issue and are recognised as such by people who work in the Iranian tourism industry (Butler *et al.* 2012).

Despite these barriers, Iran has continued to actively pursue cultural tourism. It now has 15 world heritage sites (largely pre-Islamic) and a large number of sites tentatively listed (over 50 sites, tending to be more recent). The state has demonstrated a commitment to cultural heritage tourism for an extended period and into the future, and Iran has many resources, including its rich and diverse living cultures, that remain largely untapped. Furthermore, tourist numbers have grown substantially since the early 1990s, and Iran does not rely on Western nations. While international tourism is important, particularly for bringing income into Iran, the importance of domestic tourism cannot be overstated. Domestic tourism dwarfs the international market. According to the Department of Tourism, the number of domestic tourists in 2012 was approximately 52 million and for international tourists it was approximately 3 million.⁴ A significant proportion of the international visitors are likely to be Iranian expatriates visiting friends and relatives or returning on business trips.

Immediately after the revolution the number of international tourists fell from 680,000 in 1978 to a low of 9,300 in 1990 (ITTO 2001). World Bank figures on international visitation indicate that Iran recovered across the 1990s to a high of 2.7 million visitors in 2006 with an expenditure of just over \$US5 billion, but then declined.⁵ Figures from 1999 indicate that 36.5 per cent of Iran's visitors came from the Middle East and Caucasia, 22.6 per cent from South Asia and 19.1 per cent from Europe (Butler *et al.* 2012). Taken as a block, the *Organisation of Islamic Conference Countries* and Turkey (which otherwise is counted as Europe) constituted 82 per cent of all international visitors (Butler *et al.* 2012). Given the

3 While Iran is not a developing country, it is interestingly included in the Timothy and Nyaupane (2009) book, most likely due to parallels with its neighbours who are developing countries.

4 There has been growth in domestic and international tourism since 1999, when there were 1.3 million international visitors compared with 32.5 million domestic visitors Butler, R., O'Gorman, K.D. and Prentice, R. 2012. *Destination Appraisal for European Cultural Tourism to Iran*. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 14(4), pp. 323–38.

5 Expenditure is in 2012 \$US. These figures end in 2008 so they cannot be compared with the official Iranian statistics that indicate that tourism in 2012 was approximately 3 million.

orientation of the government and the international political climate, a focus on Islamic markets ensures tourism that is acceptable to the state and turns religious conservatism into an attraction for some potential visitors. Iran's marketing and visa arrangements have been focussed on these nations (Zamani-Farahani and Henderson 2010). However, the largest cultural tourism market is Europe, and these are the people who are most likely to be attracted to Iran's wealth of non-Islamic heritage. Currently, western visitors tend to travel in tour groups in Iran (Rabiee 2011), which addresses language barriers and smooths access across international borders.

Pasargadae

Due to the description in other chapters, only a brief overview of Pasargadae's heritage is provided here with a focus on elements necessary for analysing the accommodations and tensions between tourism and heritage. As the first dynastic capital of the Achaemenid Empire, founded by Cyrus the Great, in Pars, homeland of the Persians, in the sixth century BCE, Pasargadae is strongly connected to Persia, although domestic visitors often are attracted to iconic monuments as national symbols (for instance, Borobudur temple in Indonesia is considered national heritage (Anderson 1990, pp. 152–93)). Pasargadae also has Islamic connections. As described in other chapters of this book, the Mausoleum of Cyrus was called the Mausoleum of the Mother of Solomon sometime after the seventh century CE and an Atabaki mosque was built there in the tenth century, then abandoned in the fourteenth century. The surrounding archaeological sites within the Pasargadae buffer zone are Islamic (the Madrassah or Caravanserai) or considered sacred by locals (a mound called *Tape-e Hazarat-e Ya'qub* has not been cleared of trees due to its sacred status). As discussed in previous chapters, while the conservation focus has been on the garden and tomb of Cyrus the Great, Pasargadae was a much larger settlement that included settlements and farms and was linked to trade routes and an advanced water distribution network. Hence Pasargadae is a cultural landscape with a heritage site at its centre. Additionally, the Mausoleum of Cyrus the Great is still considered a place of pilgrimage by local people. Often connections to iconic groupings (such as Persia, Islam or the Iranian nation), rather than the specific values that justify world heritage (as an expression of royal Achaemenid architecture and art and a prototype of the four gardens type of royal ensemble) are the elements that attract tourists.

Pasargadae is owned by the state and is managed by the Parse-Pasargadae Research Foundation (PPRF) within the ICHHTO, as are the nearby heritage sites. The ICHHTO used to be a branch of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The site is managed as one of a group of sites (including Persepolis), and has a local management team who are based on the site (Parse-Pasargadae Research Foundation 2002). A more detailed discussion of this management structure is provided in Chapter 3.

Pasargadae is close to five villages, in particular the village of *Madar-i Solaiman* (Mother of Solomon), which had little tourism infrastructure when Pasargadae was listed as world heritage in 2004. The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)⁶ evaluation for the World Heritage Listing noted that ‘the current level of development of the villages is very low’ and therefore the site was not threatened by development (International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) 2004, p.32). It also indicated that the villages were not immediately ready to take advantage of cultural tourism opportunities. There was little tourist accommodation at all around Pasargadae at this time, creating barriers for the region to benefit economically from the iconic status of the site, in particular its capacity to attract international visitors (Chapter 3 and Parse-Pasargadae Research Foundation 2002). Two issues often affect communities surrounding iconic heritage sites: installing heritage protection often comes at an initial cost to local communities; and iconic sites of national importance can create barriers to surrounding communities as part of the monumentalising process (Graham *et al.* 2000). As discussed in Chapter 3, industrial and agricultural development was restricted in the core and buffer zones, leading to depreciation of property values, outmigration of young people, and hostility towards Pasargadae management and conservation activities. Furthermore, some conservation decisions impacted on local connections to Pasargadae, such as the removal of Atabaki mosque. Relations with local communities and groups have become an important management issue.

Pasargadae has an excellent body of longitudinal statistics to assist with understanding tourism collected by the PPRF. While the number of international visitors to Pasargadae has fluctuated between 10,000 and 20,000 between 1997 and 2011 (Figure 7.1), there has been strong growth in domestic visitor numbers with 2007 and 2008 recording a growth of 85 per cent and 40 per cent respectively.⁷ Since 2008, domestic visitor numbers have consistently been over 310,000 and appear to have stabilised between 310,000 and 330,000. Domestic visitation peaks around the Iranian New Year (*Nowruz*), with up to half of all annual domestic visits in the first month of the Iranian year (*Farvardin*) which coincides with the start of Spring. The large increase in domestic visitors both increases the importance of Persian heritage to the Iranian government and insulates the site from variable international visitor numbers. International visits peaked in the March-April period and in the September-October period, coinciding with the European and American travel season. Europeans make up the majority of international visitors annually, averaging 70 per cent of internationals (7899 visitors) between 2008

6 The ICOMOS assesses sites as part of the process of UNESCO’s world heritage listing, and monitors the state of conservation of existing sites. ICOMOS is a network of experts created in 1965, and plays a key role in the application of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention.

7 Please note that there is an imperfect translation between the Iranian calendar and the Gregorian/Western calendar. The Iranian calendar starts in Farvardin, which coincides with 20 March to 19 April in the Gregorian calendar. Hence the double-badging of years.

and 2011 with the largest nationality being German. However, Europeans have declined from 80 per cent of all visitors in 2008 to 63 per cent in 2011 while the percentage of Asian visitors has increased annually (from 14 per cent to 29 per cent) with the majority of Asian visitors coming from Japan.

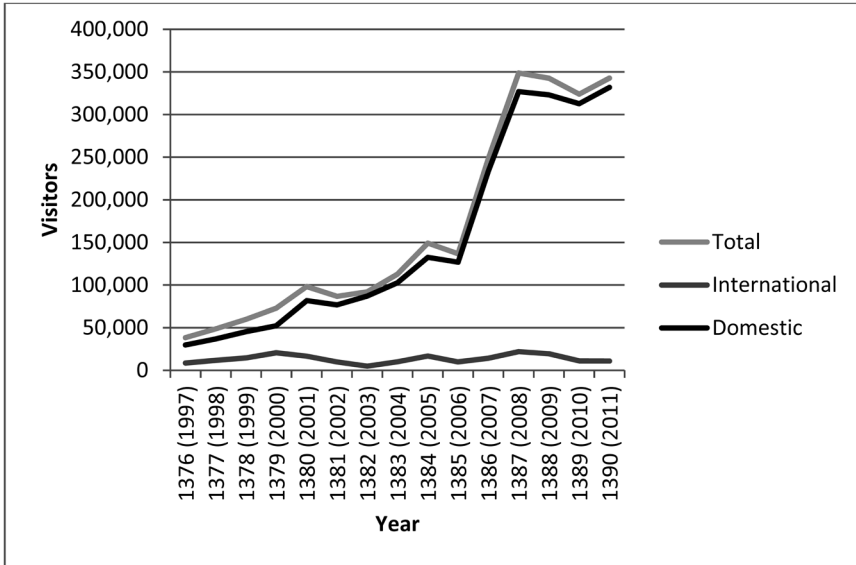


Figure 7.1 International, domestic and total visitation between 1997 and 2011

Source: ICHHT Surveys

While international and domestic visitors are not distinguished in the statistics on the characteristics and motivations of visitors, given that international visits declined from 6 per cent in 2008 to 3 per cent in 2011, it is a safe assumption that the statistics from surveys between 2008 and 2011 will reflect the characteristics of Iranian rather than international visitors. There have consistently been more male than female visitors, with males constituting 63 per cent of all visits between 2008 and 2011. Visits were spread throughout the day and were typically for a morning or afternoon (84 per cent of respondents from 2010 and 2011 stayed for less than 5 hours). The reason for the trip for visitors were overwhelmingly to see cultural and heritage attractions (75 per cent in 2012), indicating the importance of Pasargadae to tourism to the region. Its iconic status is also demonstrated through its capacity to generate repeat visits (38 per cent of visitors in 2012 had visited the site previously) with 10 per cent having visited more than three times.

Visitors stayed in a variety of accommodation types. Visitors who are not travelling in school groups generally rent houses (25 per cent in a 2012 survey). Other popular forms of accommodation in the 2012 survey were staying with friends (16 per cent), hotels and guesthouses (14 per cent) and using tents (13 per cent). Surveys in 2009, 2010 and 2011 paint a picture of a site that is improving many aspects of its visitor experience, but still has work to do. The majority of the visitors thought Pasargadae was clean (60 per cent very appropriate or appropriate), and had clean and accessible toilets (75 per cent very appropriate, appropriate or medium). While responses to information disseminated by guides was reasonably positive (49 per cent appropriate or very appropriate, 37 per cent medium), almost half the visitors surveyed in 2011 (48 per cent) rated the quality of information and service provision after entering the site as inappropriate or very inappropriate, and responses indicated some concern as to the conservation of the monuments (27 per cent of respondents rated 'weak' in 2008). This reflects a lack of understanding of conservation activities in a site that is a historic ruin. The city-gardens have vanished in the course of time and some of the specialised restoration activities are not available to the general public. In comparison with Persepolis, the properties in Pasargadae are not only fewer in number but also are more separated (due to the original planning). These absences could be addressed through interpretation, but are not adequately addressed by the guides and media on the site. The plans for a museum and associated interpretative infrastructure are likely to substantially improve interpretation.

While Pasargadae is clearly successfully attracting Iranian visitors, it has been a long and on-going process to generate substantial revenue streams for conservation and site management. From a value of approximately USD 20,768 in 1997,⁸ income generated by Pasargadae was USD 124,257, an increase of just under 600 per cent. However, if these prices are adjusted for inflation in Iran,⁹ the income increase between 1997 and 2011 is 278 per cent. Across this period, visitation increased by 893 per cent, indicating that price increases have not kept up with the substantial inflation pressures in Iran (over 776 per cent across this period). Two factors have impacted on prices. First, although there have been increases in prices, these have not been large due to the state's desire to keep the site accessible for Iranian visitors. In fact, entrance fees doubled in 2013 but they are still well below the current inflation rate so the sites do not yet have sufficient revenue. Second, rather than using different prices for international visitors as can happen at similar sites, they were charged at the same rate as domestic visitors. Recently the price of tickets for international visitors has increased compared to domestic visitors (USD 4 compared to USD 0.60) but entry prices are still much lower than for other world heritage sites. The bottom line here is that Pasargadae is

8 All values are in USD and have been converted using the conversion rate from 1 December for each year (except 1997 where this is not available, so the rate at 1 December 1998 was used).

9 Using the consumer price index for Iran supplied by the World Bank.

not run to maximise profits, but instead has to balance competing policy demands when setting prices. Given the institutional setting of the PPRF within the Iranian government, the level of development of the surrounding villages, and the complexities of the affiliations of Pasargadae, management needs to monitor and respond to a variety of priorities and be strategic in its reasoning and affiliations.

Managing Heritage Tourism: an International Perspective

The relationship between heritage and tourism has historically been tense. Research on cultural tourism has noted that managers of heritage sites have often perceived their jobs as caring for a property or protecting a legacy, and issues like public access and the requirements of visitors were secondary considerations (McKercher and du Cros 2002). Dissonance between the desire to conserve and the drive to generate tourism is an element of the first of Graham *et al.*'s (2000) axes of contestation through the commodification of sacred objects. Sue Millar (1989, p. 14), foreseeing our current paradigm and problems, wrote that when done well, heritage tourism management 'is the key to conservation and commercial success, done badly, it may mean a significant part of our heritage is lost forever'. The tension between heritage conservation and what Pamela Ho and Bob McKercher (2004) call the tourism product, or attention to the experiences of heritage tourists, has been resolved theoretically through the concept of sustainable tourism (Hall 2000). However, the reality of heritage tourism management often struggles to meet the lofty standards of sustainable tourism theory, and there is scepticism about the outcomes (McKercher 1993). While resolution to these tensions lies in the details of management planning and routines, Graham *et al.*'s (2000) second axis of contestation requires a different level of management. This is the use of heritage by dominant and subordinate groups to set and communicate group identity and political power structures. In the case of Pasargadae, its managers need to address the tension between pre-Revolution associations with the Pahlavis, the potential opposition of other groups to conservation of Persian heritage, Persia's attractiveness for International visitors, and expressions of nationalism. The current Iranian state structures for managing heritage and tourism, and the growth of domestic visitors, suggests that the current management are successfully managing this tension.

Much like sustainable development in the Brundtland report was able to resolve tensions between conservation and development through articulating an optimistic vision based on their connectedness (Baker 2006), sustainable tourism was able to articulate a version of tourism where conservation and education were understood as integral to heritage tourism, and indeed the basis of its future existence and growth. Richard Butler's definition of sustainable tourism (itself a variation on the Brundtland definition of sustainable development (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987)) in theory addresses the impact of mass tourism on heritage (Butler 1993, p. 29):

Tourism which is developed and maintained in an area in such a manner and at such a scale that it remains viable over an indefinite period and does not degrade or alter the environment (human and physical) in which it exists to such a degree that it prohibits the successful development and wellbeing of other activities and processes.

Dallen Timothy and Stephen Boyd (2003) identify that that this requires *conservation* of the site, both of its heritage and its natural environment. Visitor numbers and behaviours should 'produce no permanent degradation of the values associated with the heritage site' (Timothy and Boyd 2003, p. 135). Conservation therefore supports the key sustainable development principles of *inter- and intra-generational equity*, and is a key component of heritage tourism management. The concept of carrying capacity, although difficult to implement, seeks to limit visitor numbers to a level that a site can sustain, both physically and in terms of visitor experiences. Conservation and equity overlap with the principle of *education*, generally provided through interpretation at a heritage attraction via formal or informal programs. While decisions about what is included in education/interpretation are political, communicating the importance of a heritage site in an interesting and appropriate manner assists in shifting behaviours and shared understandings, as well as increasing enjoyment of the site (Moscardo 1996). A site should be *financially sustainable*, with funding coming from any of a variety of sources.¹⁰ A key element of social sustainability is *participation* of key stakeholders, both in decision making and in sharing the benefits of heritage tourism development. Participation is particularly important in the case of local communities whose lives are interrupted by growing tourist numbers, and who often have strong connections to the heritage that is on display. A related issue is *access* (Timothy and Boyd 2003), where a tension exists between limiting numbers to prevent degradation, and reducing barriers to access for groups that could be excluded due to economic or ideological reasons. Finally, sustainable tourism requires *strategic planning* in order to adequately ensure that the heritage will be available in the future (Timothy and Boyd 2003). While sustainable tourism has a strong conservation focus, it also implies visitor experiences that are both enjoyable and engender a relationship to the heritage that builds respect and understanding.

While sustainable tourism sets goals for the outcomes of heritage tourism management, it does not specify how these goals are to be obtained or address the nitty-gritty of management frameworks and decisions. Moreover, it does not address many of the elements that contribute to the nebulous but important concept of the visitor experience. John Swarbrooke (2002, p. 132) identified four key factors that influence the success of attractions and therefore provide a way of

¹⁰ Revenue sources can include: user fees (including entry fees, rental costs and dual pricing), special events, retailing, lodging and catering, fees for interpretation, grants, sponsorships and donations Timothy (2007).

breaking down a discussion of management into key areas: the organisation and its resources; the product; the market; and the management of the attraction. Table 7.1 makes use of Swarbrooke's framework to map the key elements of heritage tourism management for sites like Pasargadae.

Table 7.1 Factors influencing the success of a heritage tourist attraction for both visitor experiences and sustainable tourism outcomes

Third Order: Sustainable Tourism Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conservation of heritage and environment Inter- and intra-generational equity Education Financially sustainable Participation Access Strategic planning
Second Order: Key Factors	First Order: Management Elements
The organisation and its resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience of developing and managing attractions Financial resources Institutional setting
The product	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heritage values and significance Characteristics and state of the heritage Location and relationship to surrounding region Quality of experiences Cost to access-value for money Interpretation (languages, quality of both living and non-living)
The market	Market analysis (growing, declining markets for visitors)
The management of the attraction (both day to day and strategic planning)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conservation planning, monitoring and research Intersectoral cooperation Revenue streams and planning Marketing, promotion and marketing assessment Staff management and training Guide management and training Engagement with surrounding communities and opportunities for participation Land use planning and management Integration of plans

Source: After Swarbrooke 2002, pp. 134–42

It is worth addressing the four factors separately in order to flesh out the elements of management that would be expected internationally at a site with the importance and scale of Pasargadae. First, it is necessary to understand the organisation that is

managing the site, in this case the PPRF, in particular its experience and expertise in developing and managing heritage tourism sites, its institutional location, and its access to financial resources. While marketing experience and expertise in the Foundation is important, it is addressed as a part of managing the attraction. The second factor is the product, or in this case the different elements of the visitor experience. This includes a number of elements (see Table 7.1), a few of which require more explanation. The significance, characteristics, and state of the heritage and the cultural landscape are key elements of the visitor experience. The quality of the experience requires unpacking, as it refers to cleanliness of the site, visitor facilities such as toilets and parking, and services such as retail outlets, security issues, food outlets and quality of customer service. The quality of the experience can also include whether a site addresses special considerations, such as wheelchair access, and services for the blind, deaf and mentally challenged (Page 2007, Swarbrooke 2002, Timothy and Boyd 2003). The cost of access often balances financial sustainability (including differential pricing) and equity, and can also be used to address visitor management issues through techniques like charging at high-volume times to address crowding (Garrod and Fyall 1998). Interpretation is one of the most important elements of the visitor experience as it addresses education and conservation through explaining appropriate behaviour and it increases enjoyment (Moscardo 1996, Swarbrooke 2002, Timothy and Boyd 2003). The third factor is the market, in particular understanding of shifts and decisions such as whether to try to focus on one segment, or attract a broad spectrum.

The fourth factor is the management of the attraction. Conservation planning, monitoring and research should be addressed through a conservation plan or similar that sets the parameters for all management activities. While addressing the broad options of preservation, restoration and renovation, it also needs to assess pressures on the sites (including illegal excavation in the buffer zone) and appropriate responses (such as limiting contact, changing land uses, visitor numbers and movement). In a site like Pasargadae, management needs to address a variety of different issues at different scales. Intersectoral cooperation needs to occur at the national, regional and local levels and includes contributions to regional planning, connections to other plans, cooperation with local authorities and could even encompass developing appropriate structures for site management depending on the ownership of land surrounding the site and division of responsibilities.

Management needs to address revenue streams, not just from fees, but also from special purpose projects, grants, sponsorship and donations. Marketing needs to address not just promotional materials, but also assessment as to its effectiveness. Marketing should be integrated with conservation goals and interpretation of the site (Ho and McKercher 2004). Staff management and training is an important element of management that ensures that staff activities support rather than hinder the visitor experience and conservation efforts. Guide management and training is important for the same reasons.

The next two elements (engagement with surrounding communities and opportunities for participation, and land use planning and management) are related. Management of the attraction needs to engage with the communities that surround it and provide opportunities for participation if it is to be considered sustainable tourism. Engagement has three elements. First, local communities need to be made aware of the significance of the site (if they are not already) and provided with opportunities to continue and develop relationships with what for them is local heritage. Second, there needs to be opportunities for decision making, particularly in areas such as land use and interpretation where local views and information at a planning stage would address potentially difficult issues before they occur. Third, local communities should be given the opportunity to benefit economically from the site. Generating local economic benefits can be difficult in locations like Pasargadae, which is primarily an agricultural community and where there is historically a low level of engagement with tourism. Land use planning and management is an important element of addressing both conservation goals, and creating enjoyable visitor experiences. It includes separating activities, the creation of buffer zones and taking natural landscapes into account. Finally, all of these elements need to be integrated into a strategic vision and steps that are prioritised and staged over a number of years.

Managing Tourism at Pasargadae: Successes and Challenges

The first of the four key factors, the organisation that manages the heritage site and its resources, focuses on the PPRF. The PPRF has been managing Pasargadae since 2001 and manages two major sites in Iran (Persepolis and Pasargadae), including the buffer zones that contain 657 sites in Pasargadae alone. It has extensive experience with heritage management and has been successful at expanding the number of World Heritage listings and working with UNESCO. It has played a large role in establishing and shaping government support for heritage in Iran. Chapter 3 indicates the PPRF sits in a strong institutional setting. It now employs approximately 150 people including 37 at Pasargadae. The Director of Pasargadae is well supported by an institutional structure that has checks and balances between the site, the PPRF, and the ICHHTO. The management structure includes regional and local representatives alongside heritage managers and experts in conservation and economics. The technical committee and the base management team provide oversight for both research and conservation activities and management decision making. There is integration of local representatives in the management structure, although this does not extend to representatives from local villages. The focus at Pasargadae (and more generally in the PPRF) historically was on conservation rather than tourism management, although this has shifted since the world heritage listing in 2004 when staff numbers increased dramatically. Consequently, heritage tourism planning and management is not as developed as conservation planning and management. As a world heritage site, the PPRF receives national as well as

local funding for managing Pasargadae, and this state support constitutes the bulk of its revenue. It does not independently hold financial resources in the form of investments, trusts or properties. A discussion of revenue streams and marketing is returned to in the paragraph below on management.

The second element, the heritage product, needs to consider both the Pasargadae site and the cultural landscape within which it is located. The location of Pasargadae (and the region) is 90 minutes from Shiraz, the capital of the Fars province, and eight hours from Tehran. However, it is only one hour from Persepolis, and this proximity makes it a key element of the Persian heritage experience in Iran. The site itself has a long history of archaeological research and is well maintained. The heritage values have been clearly established and form the basis of the world heritage listing. The quality of experiences at the site can be judged by tourists' survey responses. The site is judged positively for cleanliness and toilet facilities, and information provided by guides was judged to be of a reasonable quality, but could use some improvement. A related concern is the response to the state of conservation of the monument, which was generally judged to be weak. As stated previously, this response reflects interpretation and education issues at a historic ruin as site conservation is monitored and well-managed. The issues of value for money and interpretation require a distinction to be made between international and domestic visitors. While international visitors are charged more than domestic visitors and fees have recently increased, the entry fee is still low and the experience is excellent value for money. With regards to interpretation, international visitors generally are mediated by tour groups, who provide their own guides and are responsible for the quality of information and interpretation provided. The ICHHTO educates guides about Pasargadae as part of their training which is discussed in the management section below. For those tourists who visit sites independently brochures, books, films and CDs are available, and signboards are provided giving them a historical and architectural description of the site and its elements as well as its map both in Farsi and English. For domestic visitors, trained guides are available at the site, and during peak times (like *Nowruz*), university students in relevant fields of study are trained and employed as guides. Shops and a restaurant operate at Pasargadae providing services to visitors, and their quality has not been assessed. There are plans to add to the visitor experience through two initiatives: rerouting the tourist path to the original historical route so that visitors enter via the Darvazeh (Gate) Palace, and end at the mausoleum of Cyrus the Great; and finalising a museum complex that will include exhibitions and multimedia for tourists.

The cultural landscape has posed greater issues. While the site has been under state control for many years and was registered in 1930, land use restrictions (listed in Chapter 3) in the surrounding landscape are more recent, beginning in 1988 and expanded in 2002 in preparation for the world heritage listing. In terms of the visitor experience, these restrictions support the heritage values and have led to improved maintenance of other historical properties. The cultural landscape also presents an opportunity to engage with other outstanding features of the

Achaemenid Empire, in particular the residential, farming and water distribution systems that accompanied and supported the cultural innovations celebrated by the world heritage listing. These opportunities have not yet been developed, although services have improved at these sites including medical emergency centres. There are also issues with the level of tourism infrastructure in the surrounding towns, which are beginning to pursue tourism opportunities, but are limited by the small number of international visitors and the control of their itinerary by tour companies. Efforts to address this issue are discussed further in the final section on management.

Market analysis (third element) indicates a reliance on the domestic market. However, the domestic market is highly seasonal (during Nowruz) and does not have a high purchasing power. The international market is preferable due to its higher spending power and also continues through the low season. However, international sanctions and media representations are barriers to growing international numbers. The domestic market has remained strong, and their potential reaction to entry fee increases should be assessed as it is the easiest and most effective way of raising revenue. As stated previously, international visitors tend to be on tours, and local visitors are self-managed.

The final element is management. Conservation, monitoring and research, as discussed in Chapter 3, are well structured and connected to funding mechanisms in the ICHHTO. Conservation work follows a documented process that assesses conservation works against clear priorities that ensure that funding flows to where it is most needed. Monitoring is also clearly documented and includes the buffer zone as well as the core zone. Monitoring in each zone is tailored to each element, and makes use of interdisciplinary approaches appropriate to a site the size and complexity of Pasargadae. Research on Pasargadae began in 1928 and continues today. It has its own funding streams, and is supported by an archive of information at Pasargadae. Research includes annual visitor surveys that assess visitors' responses and attitudes to Pasargadae as well as collecting demographic and trip data. A number of conservation measures are applied at Pasargadae, including use of guides, zoning, and separating visitors from the ruins. Illegal excavation in the buffer zone has been a problem in the past and requires greater local government attention if it is going to be addressed. Intersectoral cooperation occurs through the integration of different levels of government into the institutional structure. Local, state and national level politicians are included in committees at various levels of the PPRF, ensuring that different levels of government are aware of each other's plans. Restrictions on activities in the buffer and core zones ensure that other plans take the heritage values of the region into account, although a collaborative approach is preferable to try to meet a variety of regional goals.

The financial resources of the PPRF are reliant on support from the state with the bulk of funding split between the national government (70 per cent), and the local government (30 per cent). A more diversified set of funding sources would be preferable, but fees are kept low to ensure that the site is accessible and international visitation and investment is limited by sanctions and representations

of Iran in the international media. Removal of the sanctions is likely to stimulate international visitation and aid sales at the site and the surrounding villages. Some sites receive public donations and religious endowments, but this funding is limited, and little funding is received from international sources. The PPRF is likely to remain financially reliant on the ICHHTO in the near future, and therefore be exposed to state funding cycles.

Marketing is carried out in conjunction with education and training activities for the domestic market. This includes some media reports and events such as festivals, and developing multimedia and printed material. However, the PPRF does not undertake tourism marketing or have a marketing plan or budget. Marketing to international visitors occurs through the union for travel guides, travel agencies and hoteliers, and the primary product is package tours. Hence the PPRF has little influence over international marketing. Even if it did choose to market itself internationally, such promotion would be more effective after international sanctions are lifted. Monitoring of international marketing would be a good first step towards international promotion once sanctions are lifted. Staff management and training is carried out by the PPRF and occurs at local, national and international levels. The ICHHTO and private companies train tour guides at the provincial and national levels, guides are licensed, and annual renewal is linked to continued training. Educational activities are run for students at both school and university levels. Museum exhibitions, cultural events, and expert sessions are also part of Pasargadae's educational activities, with two cultural events and approximately two expert sessions run annually.

Engagement with the surrounding communities and opportunities for local participation are ongoing issues for the PPRF that are linked to conservation initiatives and land use planning. While the increased heritage regulations have created tensions with local communities, the presence of the heritage site and the activities of the PPRF are shifting attitudes. Marketing and educational activities are increasing local community awareness of the heritage values of the site and region. *Madar-i Solaiman* village in particular has been active in taking advantage of their location near the entrance route to the complex. There are greater issues for other villages further away from the complex that are within the buffer zone, but are not as well located to take advantage of tourism opportunities. Almost all of the employees at Pasargadae live locally, and the retail and food businesses in the site are locally owned. Hence Pasargadae is contributing to local employment, and local youth are pursuing study in the fields of tourism and cultural heritage. However, the low level of international visitation and seasonality of domestic visitors is a major barrier to local engagement as the revenue stream needs to grow before tourism presents an attractive alternative to agricultural work. Furthermore, there is no tourism plan or marketing plan for the region, indicating that conservation has been a higher planning priority than tourism development, although there is now increasing attention to tourism. Recognising these issues, the PPRF has placed a high priority on engaging with the local community (such as plans to support local heritage NGOs) and providing them with employment

opportunities. The result is a region that, although still disliking the restrictions of heritage conservation, has a higher appreciation for and engagement with heritage and tourism than other regions.

Conclusion

While international tourism to Iran remains low there are hopeful signs. Domestic tourism is booming, there is strong interest in Iran's Persian heritage, and the election of a moderate President could pre-empt improved international relations and growth in international tourist numbers. With prospects for heritage tourism growth on the horizon, reflecting on the principles of sustainable tourism with respect to Pasargadae provides an indication of its potential as a long term driver of regional development. The conservation of Pasargadae's cultural heritage has been the highest priority for the PPRF and it has been supported by the national government through the ICHHTO in its conservation initiatives. The world heritage listing in 2004 was a landmark for both conservation initiatives and tourism, although more attention has been given to conservation as would be expected for an organisation like the PPRF. Intra and inter-generational equity is supported by the conservation effort that ensures that the heritage will be available for future generations. Education is emphasised on the site through programs for staff, visitors and local communities, and the Pasargadae Base contributes to publications, museum exhibitions and expert seminars. Entry fees are no barrier to access for Iranians or international visitors seeking to engage with Pasargadae. Handicapped access is quite easy as the site is flat, with only one location (*Tall-i Takht*) in need of a lift, which is currently being considered.

Financial sustainability is an issue for Pasargadae due to the strong reliance on state funding. While this is an excellent source of support, a more varied set of revenue streams would assist in ensuring that conservation activities are sustainable into the future. This could be enhanced through seeking international funding, increasing entry fees (creating potential access issues), and through growing international tourism, although this is unlikely until international sanctions are relaxed. Relations with local communities are also problematic as conservation measures have placed restrictions on development opportunities, and tourism is not yet large or lucrative enough to provide a viable development pathway. This is due to both the capacities of the local communities and infrastructure, the international political environment, and the relatively short period of time that these kinds of opportunities have been pursued. The conservation focus and expertise of the PPRF needs to be accompanied by a tourism focus and expertise. This is reflected in the strategic planning, which has been focussed on conservation, but now requires a tourism planning focus with an emphasis on increasing revenue to the region from the domestic market and spreading the peak season. The conservation emphasis at Pasargadae provides an excellent foundation to pursue sustainable tourism, and local communities are starting to become engaged with heritage

and heritage tourism, including education and training. This direction needs to be supported¹¹ if issues of financial sustainability and local engagement are to be adequately addressed, and for the heritage of the region to become the basis for sustainable tourism.

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¹¹ Potentially by further engagement, tourism infrastructure development, and a strong regional communication and marketing plan.

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