

## Site Management Strategies for UNESCO World Heritage Sites: The Case of the Letoon Sanctuary in Turkey

By Aybike Yenel\* & Müge Bahçeci‡

*Letoon is an archaeological site in Turkey inscribed at the World Heritage List in 1988 for its influence on the Lycian and subsequent Western architecture. In recent years, in order to protect the international significance of the sites, the World Heritage Committee has required preparing five-year management plans for heritage sites. This study focuses on the methodology of the conservation and presentation of the site by gathering and analyzing the necessary data for the management plan of Letoon. The site management plan defines a framework for the protection and enhancement of the architectural, archaeological, historical and cultural assets of the site. In this paper, a site boundary is proposed for the Letoon Management Plan and studied in three stages. Firstly, protection, presentation, and visitor policies will be developed by providing access to national and international platforms. Secondly, a strategy will be defined according to the vision to solve problems of the archaeological sites, and existing settlements. Finally, an action plan for site activities will be prepared following decisions about usage and transformation for tourism purposes.*

**Keywords:** site management plan, UNESCO world heritage list, Lycia, Letoon sanctuary, Turkey

### Introduction

The main focus of this study is to evaluate the Letoon Sanctuary for the protection of the natural integrity of the site which has an outstanding universal value in the World Heritage List together with Xanthos since 1988. The purpose of the study is to identify management issues affecting the site; and to make a preliminary evaluation to develop policies, actions, and strategies for the site in order to transfer its values to future generations.

This study is carried out under the name of "Preservation and Site Management Strategies in World Heritage Sites: The Management Plan Proposal of the Letoon Monuments and Its Environment" within the scope of the master thesis in Başkent University, Institute of Science, Department of Architecture. This article is the result of the early data from the thesis.

Xanthos-Letoon are two neighboring settlements that have remarkable archaeological values located in southwestern Anatolia, respectively within the boundaries of Antalya and Muğla Provinces. It represents the most unique extant architectural example of the ancient Lycian Civilization, which was one of the

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most important cultures of the Iron Age in Anatolia. The two sites strikingly illustrate the continuity and unique combination of the Anatolian, Greek, Roman, and Byzantine civilizations (UNESCO 2020). Xanthos-Letoon was co-registered in 1988 and considered as "cultural" (ii)<sup>1</sup> and (iii)<sup>2</sup> criteria (UNESCO National Commission of Turkey 2009).

Located in Antalya province, Xanthos is the biggest administrative center of Lycia. The city, which was independent until it was ruled by the Persians in 545 B.C, was completely burnt down nearly a century later. After this fire, the city was rebuilt. In the second century B.C, it assumed the duty of being the capital of the Lycian League. The city, which later came under the control of the Romans, came under Byzantine rule and remained under Byzantine rule until the Arab raids in the seventh century. This site shows the effects of Lycian traditions, Hellenistic and Roman periods in the structures built by every civilization that settled down (KVMGM 2020b) (Figure 1).

**Figure 1.** *The Xanthos Ancient City*



Source: Aybike Yenel's Personal Archive 2019.

Located in Muğla province, Letoon was the water source in the Ancient period and the sanctuary associated with the water nymphs. The Letoon Sanctuary, which is settled 4 kilometers away from Xanthos, was the sacred center of the Lycia region that has religious and political significance. Except for the private residences of the priests and religious officials, all monuments have religious functions. As the official sacred center of the Lycian Union in the Hellenistic

<sup>1</sup>Criterion (ii): Xanthos-Letoon directly influenced the architecture of the principal ancient cities of Lycia such as Patara, Pınara, and Myra, as well as the neighboring provinces. The Halicarnassus Mausoleum, which was ranked as one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, is directly influenced by Xanthos' Nereid Monument (UNESCO 2020).

<sup>2</sup>Criterion (iii): Xanthos-Letoon bears exceptional testimony to the Lycian civilization, both through the many inscriptions found at the two sites and through the remarkable funerary monuments preserved within the property. The longest and most important texts in the Lycian language were found in Xanthos-Letoon. The inscriptions, most of which were carved in rock or on huge monoliths, are considered exceptional evidence of this unique and long-forgotten Indo-European language. The rock art tombs, pillar tombs and pillar-mounted sarcophagi represent a novel type of funerary architecture. The rich series of Lycian tombs in Xanthos and Letoon enable us to fully understand the successive acculturation phenomena that took place in Lycia from the 6<sup>th</sup> century onwards (UNESCO 2020).

period, where the management decisions were taken by the union were announced to the public (Özdilek and Atik Korkmaz 2018) (Figure 2).

**Figure 2.** *The Letoon Sanctuary*



Source: Aybike Yenel's Personal Archive 2019.

The Letoon Sanctuary is an example of uninterrupted religious development with religious structures up to the seventh century. Archaeological ruins in Letoon, where traces of an uninterrupted sacredness from polytheistic religions to divine religions are traces. It goes back to the eighth century. The most important feature of this sanctuary, which is shaped around an underground water source and rocks, is that it contains traces of the monumental wooden architecture of Lycia. Its impact can be seen in Hellenistic architecture. The concept of holiness in the site has its reflection in the Christian period buildings. There are stone inscriptions in which the longest and most important texts can be seen in the Lycian language.

In this paper, firstly UNESCO's site management strategies for World Heritage Sites will be studied and the current situation of site management policies will be evaluated in Turkey after the legislative changes made in 2004. Secondly, the case of Letoon will be discussed in two scales: "The Lycian Way and Its Surroundings Settlements" and "Letoon Sanctuary and Its Surroundings". Finally, a preliminary assessment of boundaries, scope, and stages of the site management will be proposed for the Letoon.

## Literature Review

### *The Site Management*

The site management defines an approach that covers the entire process of identifying the management site, preparing, implementing, monitoring and updating the management plans following international acceptances (Uluslan 2016). In *Conservation Management: A Practical Guide* published by the English Heritage, the definition of site management is as follows: "having a clear idea and specific policies for the improvement of the area and for tackling problems in a number of co-ordinated ways" (English Heritage Towns Forum 1998).

The management plan of ICOMOS is defined in *The Valletta Principles for the Safeguarding and Management of Historic Cities, Towns, and Urban Areas*, as

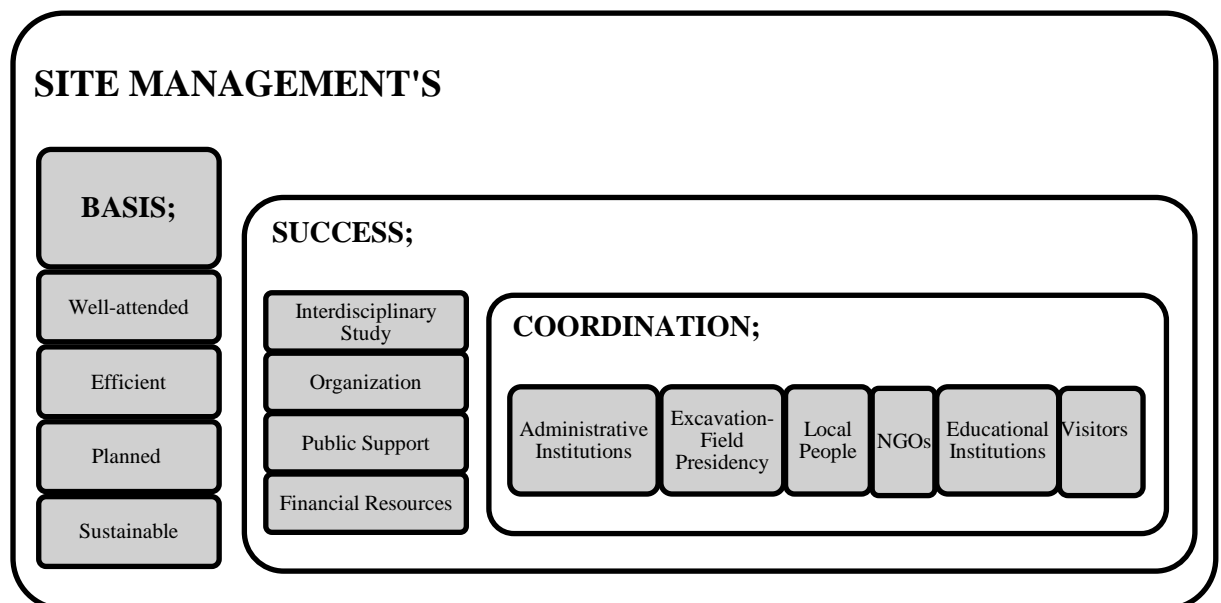
follows: "A Management Plan is a document specifying in detail all the strategies and tools to be used for heritage protection and which at the same time responds to the needs of contemporary life. It contains legislative, financial, administrative and conservation documents, as well as Conservation and Monitoring Plans" (ICOMOS 2011).

The planning process is a multidisciplinary activity and should include input from experts depending on the importance of the site. *Management Guidelines for World Cultural Heritage Sites*, published by Feilden and Jokilehto in 1998, published the standards set by ICCROM in cultural heritage management. Accordingly, the management plan has to consider national and local plans. These plans should implement estimates of population growth or decline, economic factors, traffic, and industrial zones. The management plan should be based on reviews and reports prepared by the appropriate multidisciplinary teams (Feilden and Jokilehto 1998).

The different masses and disciplines that take an active role in urban conservation within the contemporary conservation understanding need to carry out conservation actions in an "efficient" manner and "planned" within the framework of "sustainable" by "well-attended" based on social reconciliation and dialogue. As a result of this requirement, trying to protect within the whole of geographical, social and cultural spaces is the basis of the concept of the site management. The site management is a kind of coordination system (Ekinci 2009).

The site management; administrative institutions with responsibility in the site to be protected, excavation-field presidency, residents and temporary beneficiaries of the site, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), educational institutions (universities, etc.) and non-local elements (visitors, tourists, students, etc.) is a platform to provide communication between. In order to successfully implement site management, interdisciplinary study, good organization, sensitive public support, and financial resources are required (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Framework of the Site Management

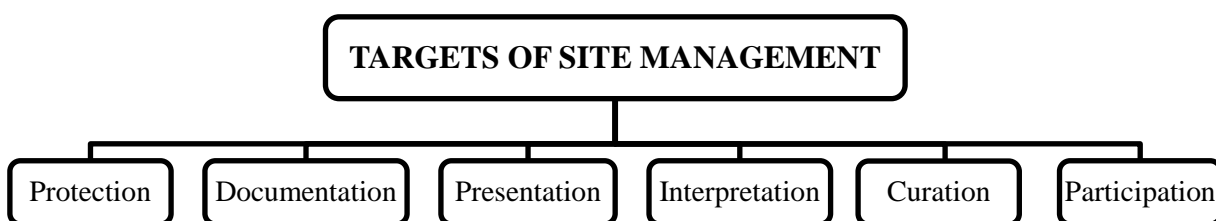


*The Site Management for UNESCO*

According to UNESCO *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*, the aim of a management plan is to ensure the effective protection of the candidate sites for present and future generations (Makuvaza 2017, UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2019).

The site management programme for UNESCO translates into a concrete management plan that combines general strategies and policies with specific goals that relate to the significance and setting of the site. A management plan is obviously targeted at managing over the long-term a site that remains entirely in situ, but also partially excavated sites and what thereof remains, as well as the removed artefacts (UNESCO 2017) (Table 2).

**Table 2.** *Framework of the Site Management for UNESCO*



The general goals of cultural heritage management policy are:

- Mitigating impacts on endangered sites.
- Preventing destruction of sites and dispersal of artefacts by denying permits to Exploiters seeking private financial gain.
- Creating local, national, and international inventories of the sites.
- Protecting and interpreting sites in situ whenever possible.
- Excavating sites only when there are scientific objectives or interests for public enjoyment, adequate funding, professional staff, and provisions for documentation, conservation, curation, reporting and publication.
- Involving the public so that people can become the guardians of their cultural heritage.
- Bringing the excitement of cultural sites to the public in reputable museum exhibitions, media presentations, and publications (UNESCO 2017).

The following topics should be considered in archaeological sites that have been nominated for the World Heritage List or are currently on the Tentative List:

- Protection, Promotion, Adaptation, and Management.
- Control of central government services in accordance with local authorities and their people.
- Users' attitudes, as well as those involved with the protection process.

- Balanced development of the wider area in association with the local tradition.

As a result, cultural - material (tangible) and intangible- heritage must be contributed to the preservation and appointment of the identity (ICOMOS 2002).

As site management strategies in UNESCO World Heritage Sites:

- It should be targeted with an interdisciplinary approach to various issues related to the protection, presentation, and management of cultural heritage (Bahçeci 1994).
- An introduction should be planned, taking into account the maintenance; repair and/or excavation work in the area, taking into account the restoration work that is part of the presentation.
- In order to ensure the proper presentation, correct perception of the sites, the cultural infrastructure and educational level of the visitors coming to the area should be determined first and the integrity of the site should be considered as the most appropriate way to make the site inviting.

#### *Site Management in Turkey*

Turkey adopted *The Convention on the protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage*<sup>3</sup> which was prepared by UNESCO in 1983. In the candidacy file of the asset to be nominated for the UNESCO World Heritage List, it is mandatory to have an approved management plan, which will be presented as a guarantee of the survival of this heritage and the details of the studies to be carried out in the short-medium-long term.

Accordingly, preparation of site management plans for protected sites in Turkey; Annex-2 of Law No. 5226 on 14.07.2004 to *The Law on the Protection of Cultural and Natural Assets*<sup>4</sup> numbered 2863 dated 21.07.1983 has been added and made mandatory. *The Law & Amendment of the Law on the Protection of Cultural and Natural Assets Laws*<sup>5</sup> numbered 5226 and their related regulations determined the principles of the site management in Turkey.

According to Law No. 2863, a Management Plan is a plan created through considering the business project, excavation plan, landscape plan or urban conservation plan, and prepared to ensure the conservation, sustaining and evaluation of the management site. These plans also include the annual and 5-year period implementation stages and budget and are revised every five years (Annex-2: 14.07.2004-Article 3, Paragraph-11).

*The Regulation on the Establishment and Duties of the Site Management and Monument Board and the Procedures and Principles for Determining the*

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<sup>3</sup>The Convention on the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage (14 February 1983). Official Gazette (Number: 17959).

<sup>4</sup>The Law on the Protection of Cultural and Natural Assets (7 July 1983). Official Gazette (Number: 18113).

<sup>5</sup>The Law & Amendment of the Law on the Protection of Cultural and Natural Assets Laws (14 July 2004). Official Gazette (Number: 25535).

*Management Areas*<sup>6</sup> was published in the Official Paper dated 27.11.2005. Republic of Turkey Ministry of Culture and Tourism attaches importance to the successful implementation of these laws and related regulations in World Heritage Sites.

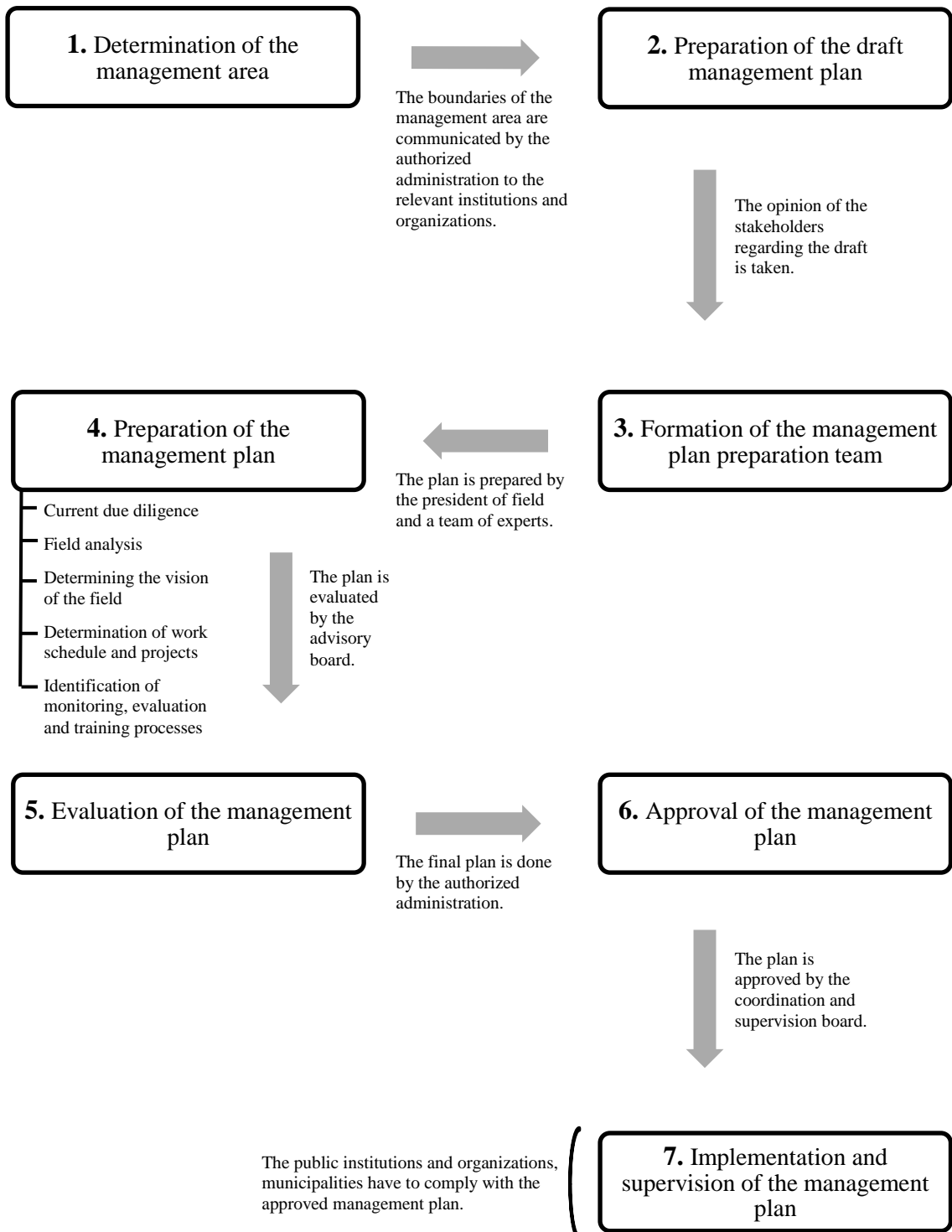
Accordingly, the objectives of the site management are as follows:

- Determination of the boundaries of the management site within historical, social, cultural, geographical, natural and artistic integrity in terms of protection, development, and evaluation of the site.
- Demonstration by the management plan of ways to strike an appropriate balance between conservation, access, sustainable economic development needs and the relevance of the local people.
- Development of general strategies, methods, and tools, determination and creation of financial resources to increase the value of the field to an international level.
- Establishment of an event network that will create international cooperation and sharing in order to improve cultural tourism.
- Creation of implementation plans for the development of regional cultural systems in sites with the potential to create a sector by associating them within a certain region.
- Cooperation between public institutions and organizations, non-governmental organizations, property rights holders, voluntary individuals and organizations and local people in the protection and evaluation of the management sites.
- Determination of the principles and limits of use and development within the framework of international protection principles and the provisions of the convention for site management in protected sites (Annex: 27.11.2005-Chapter 2, Articles-5) (Table 3).

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<sup>6</sup>The Regulation on the Establishment and Duties of the Site Management and Monument Board and the Procedures and Principles for Determining the Management Areas (27 November 2005). Official Gazette (Number: 26006).

**Table 3.** *The Site Management Process in Turkey*



Source: Annex: 27.11.2005-Chapter 2, Articles-6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13.

Turkey has 18 heritage sites, 16 of them which are cultural and 2 of them which are mixed, on the World Heritage List. In the Tentative List, there are 78 heritage sites, 73 of them are cultural, 2 of them are mixed and 3 of them are



natural (UNESCO 2019). Turkey has accelerated its management planning efforts to protect the World Heritage List and to enable the Tentative List to be included in the List through legal regulations since 2004. There are 14 management plans approved of the sites on the UNESCO World Heritage List and Tentative List by the Republic of Turkey Ministry of Culture and Tourism (Table 4).

**Table 4.** *Approved Management Plans for the World Heritage Sites in Turkey*

	Date of Inscription	Starting Date of Management Plan <sup>7</sup>
<b>Management Plans in the World Heritage List</b>		
Göbekli Tepe Site Management Plan	2018	2017
Aphrodisias Site Management Plan	2017	2010
Strategic Conservation Master Plan for Ani	2016	2009
Diyarbakır Fortress and Hevsel Gardens Cultural Landscape Management Plan	2015	2011
Ephesus Management Plan	2015	2010
Pergamon and Its Multi-Layered Landscape Management Plan	2014	2010
Bursa and Cumalıkızık Management Plan	2014	2010
Management Plan of Neolithic Site of Çatalhöyük	2012	2010
Edirne Selimiye Mosque and Social Complex Management Plan	2011	2007
Commagene Nemrut Management Plan	1987	2008
Istanbul Historic Peninsula Management Plan	1985	2009
<b>Management Plans in the World Heritage Tentative List</b>		
Mudurnu Cultural Heritage Management Plan	2015	2014
Yesemek Quarry and Sculpture Workshop Management Plan	2012	2019
Harran Site Management Plan	2000	2014

Source: KVMGM 2020a.

In Turkey, as above most of the sites which were listed in the UNESCO World Heritage List do not have a management plan. However, the World Heritage Committee has been mandatory for the sites in this List and Tentative List to have management plans. In Turkey, the legislative changes made in 2004, after that, the management plan has been prepared in many sites. Xanthos-Letoon still does not have a site management plan since 1988.

<sup>7</sup>The start date of the management plan is based on the date on which the boundaries of the management area are approved.

Xanthos-Letoon is located within the borders of two separate provinces. The World Heritage Site is administratively located within the boundaries of two separate provinces and every institution and organization acts within the boundaries of its field of protection. Also, there is no single presidency of field or coordinator for the management of the site. For these reasons, to protect the Xanthos-Letoon, which is registered together in the World Heritage List, and to increase their potential, it was deemed appropriate to consider the management plans of both areas separately (Table 5).

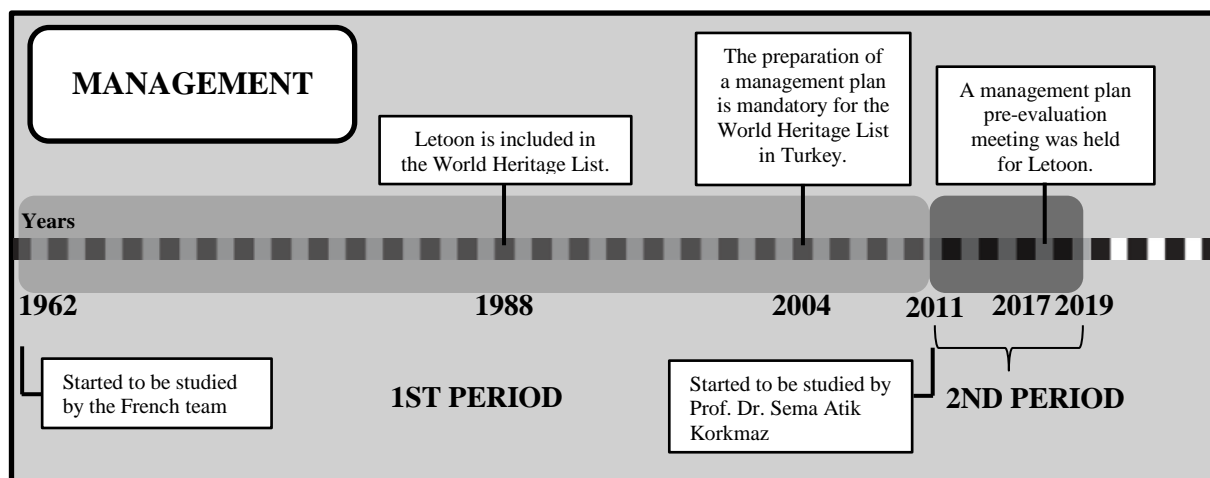
**Table 5.** Comparison of Xanthos and Letoon Management System

	<b>Xanthos</b>	<b>Letoon</b>
<b>Presidency of Excavation</b>	Prof. Dr. Burhan Varkıvanç (Akdeniz University, Faculty of Tourism, Department of Tourism Guidance, Antalya) (2011–2020)	Prof. Dr. Sema Atik Korkmaz (Başkent University, Faculty of Fine Arts, Design and Architecture, Department of Architecture, Ankara) (2011–2019)
<b>Mayorality</b>	Kınık Municipality	Seydikemer Municipality
<b>Directorate of Protection Regional Board</b>	Antalya Directorate of Cultural Heritage Protection Regional Board	Muğla Directorate of Cultural Heritage Protection Regional Board
<b>Directorate of Museums</b>	Directorate of Antalya Museum	Directorate of Fethiye Museum

## Methodology

The main subject of the study is the Letoon Sanctuary located within the borders of Seydikemer district, Muğla province. The main material of the study is archaeological studies for the site, literature data about the site, map, plan and visual material of the site, as well as interviews with the relevant persons on the site. Within the scope of the study, literature review, observation-study-analysis and oral interviews were conducted. This study is the collection of data needed for the management plan that Letoon. The analysis of the data collected focused on the methodology required for the protection and presentation of the site.

The first systematic studies at Letoon were initiated by the French archaeology team in 1962. Letoon was unearthed by the excavations that started by Prof. Dr. H. Metzger and later Christian Le Roy (DÖSİMM 2014). The second cycle of the systematic archaeological studies at Letoon has been carried out since 2011 under the presidency of Prof. Dr. Sema Atik Korkmaz, Faculty of Fine Arts, Design and Architecture, Department of Architecture, on behalf of Başkent University according to the Decree of the Council of Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the General Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums (Atik Korkmaz 2015, Letoon Excavation Archive 2017) (Table 6).

**Table 6.** *Management of the Letoon Sanctuary*

In accordance with the objectives and boundaries, the studies required to be carried out within the scope of the Letoon Management Plan have been dealt with on two scales.

1. On the scale of "The Lycian Way and Its Surroundings Settlements", the following studies have been carried out to determine and define the boundaries of the management site provided that the Republic of Turkey Ministry of Culture and Tourism approves.
  - "Letoon Archaeological and Natural Site Management Plan Preliminary Evaluation Meeting" was held with the participation of the academic members of the Excavation Committee, Fethiye Museum manager and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism representative conducted by the presidency of Prof. Dr. Sema Atik Korkmaz on 04.08.2017.
  - The data obtained from the field study on the settlements of the Lycian route was conducted between 24.07-05.08.2017. The route was followed through the ancient cities of Letoon, Xanthos, Pydnai, Sidyma, Pınara and Tlos.
2. On the scale of "The Letoon Sanctuary and Its Surroundings"; the following studies had also been carried out for the definition of the processes related to the documentation, research and presentation of the monumental structure and building elements.
  - Aybike Yenel has documented the old village houses located in the Letoon in the World Heritage Site with the permission of the Directorate of Fethiye Museum. Within the scope of her master thesis titled "Protection and Site Management Strategies in World Heritage Sites: The Management Plan Proposal of the Letoon

Monuments and Its Environment", a study was conducted in Kumluova town, Kınık town, and Antalya city center between 05-07.11.2019.

## Results

### *The Letoon Management Plan Preliminary Assessment*

The Letoon Management Plan Preliminary Assessment, as a whole, with its architectural, archaeological, historical, economic, social, cultural, natural and ecological values in line, which includes the Letoon and the Lycian Road archaeological sites aims to protect, interpret, present and maintain its continuity.

Within the scope of the preliminary assessment, in accordance with this purpose, the studies to be carried out are discussed in two scales:

- On the scale of "The Lycian Way and Its Surroundings Settlements"
- On the scale of "The Letoon Sanctuary and Its Surroundings"

The steps that can be carried out within the scope of the study are described below (Table 7).

**Table 7.** *The Letoon Management Plan Preliminary Assessment Steps*

CODE	Steps Description
LMP	THE LETOON MANAGEMENT PLAN PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT
LMPS1	1.On the scale of "The Lycian Way and Its Surroundings Settlements"
LMPS1.1	Research on determining the "Management Area" boundaries and scopes
LMPS1.2	Preparing a Management Plan for the area within the "Management Plan Border"
LMPS2	1. 2.On the scale of "The Letoon Sanctuary and Its Surroundings"
LMPS2	"Interpretation and Presentation Proposal" of the Letoon Monuments in the management plan <sup>8</sup>

### *LMPS1 The Lycian Way and its Surroundings Settlements*

The Lycian civilization is one of the most important civilizations that have left traces rooted in Anatolia. It is a union formed by several small city-states that ruled in the region (DÖŞİMM 2014). Lycia is the region today's Teke Peninsula, where the people live called "Lukka" or "Lukku" in the Hittite texts, who threats the whole Eastern Mediterranean in the second millennium (Letoon Excavation Archive 2017). The borders of Lycia, extending to the Mediterranean towards the south, are bordered by Fethiye in the west and Antalya in the east.

<sup>8</sup>LMPS2 "Interpretation and Presentation Proposal" of the Letoon Monuments in the management plan will be made within the scope of the thesis.

*LMPS1.1* In accordance with the purpose and scope described above, the following archaeological sites are defined as boundaries:

- The Letoon Sanctuary (Kumluova).
- The Xanthos Ancient City (Kınık).
- The Pxdnai Ancient City (Gavurağlı).
- The Sidyma Ancient City (Dodurga).
- The Pınara Ancient City (Minare).
- The Tlos Ancient City (Yakaköy) (Figure 3).

**Figure 3.** *Letoon Management Plan Preliminary Assessment Borders*



Source: <https://www.openstreetmap.org/relation/51855#map=10/36.5066/29.8531>.

*LMPS1.2* The Lycian Way was divided into stages and the Management Area was determined. A Management Plan Border proposal was made on the route based on the vehicle road and the Lycian trekking road. This route was created starting from Fethiye with the ancient cities of the Lycian Way and surrounding settlements. The determined settlements are important of Lycia.

#### *The Tlos Ancient City*

Tlos located in the district of Yakaköy, 49 kilometers from Fethiye, is on the UNESCO World Heritage Tentative List, and temple tombs carved into the rocks on the slope attract attention. The city is also known as the sports city of Lycia. It carries the traces of the settlement that continued without interruption from the Neolithic period to the Iron Age. Also, which is an important center in terms of the history of Christianity, is one of the most important episcopal centers of Lycia (Muğla KTB 2020c) (Figure 4).

**Figure 4.** *The Tlos Ancient City in Yakaköy*

Source: Müge Bahçeci's Personal Archive 2017.

#### *The Pınara Ancient City*

Pınara located in the district of Minare, 45 kilometers from Fethiye, is on the UNESCO World Heritage Tentative List, although the historical and epigraphic records about the city are very few, it is thought that the city was founded by colonists from Xanthos. The city consists of a bath, theater, agora, odeon, rock tombs, and two acropoleis. The fact that the majority of the rock tombs are in the form of houses gives ideas about Lycian Civil Architecture (Muğla KTB 2020b) (Figure 5).

**Figure 5.** *The Pınara Ancient City in Minare*

Source: Müge Bahçeci's Personal Archive 2017.

#### *The Sidyma Ancient City*

Sidyma is in the district of Dodurga, 57 kilometers from Fethiye, belongs to the Roman Period with its ruins that have survived to the present day. Sidyma acropolis is located on a two-part hill in the north. Southeast of the hill the acropolis was surrounded by walls that were 3 meters long and according to the location of the place. In addition to rock tombs that have similar features as in Pınara, tombs in the form of houses or sarcophagi are also the symbol of Sidyma (Muğla KTB 2020a) (Figure 6).

**Figure 6.** *The Sidyma Ancient City in Dodurga*

Source: Müge Bahçeci's Personal Archive 2017.

### *The Pydnai Ancient City*

Pydnai is found on the section of the Lycian Way walk near the district of Gavurağılı. The city was probably once a small naval and military base fortress and guarded the very west end of Patara. The marshy area around it was once a bay and was probably a deep water harbor. It is made of well-preserved polygonal masonry with 11 rectangular towers at its corners and midway along the walls. Four or five inscriptions have been found in and around the fort; all are of Imperial date and one links Pydnai with Xanthos (Lycian Turkey 2020b) (Figure 7).

**Figure 7.** *The Pydnai Ancient City in Gavurağılı*

Source: Müge Bahçeci's Personal Archive 2017.

### *The Xanthos Ancient City*

Xanthos is in the district of Kınık, 61 kilometers from Fethiye, was established on two hills overlooking the plain near the Eşen River. The first one is the Lycian acropolis, surrounded by a wall that rises steeply from the edge of the Eşen River and the second one is the higher and wider Roman acropolis in the north. It is described as the administrative center of the Lycian Union (Turkey Cultural Portal 2019).

### *LMPS2 The Letoon Sanctuary and its Surroundings*

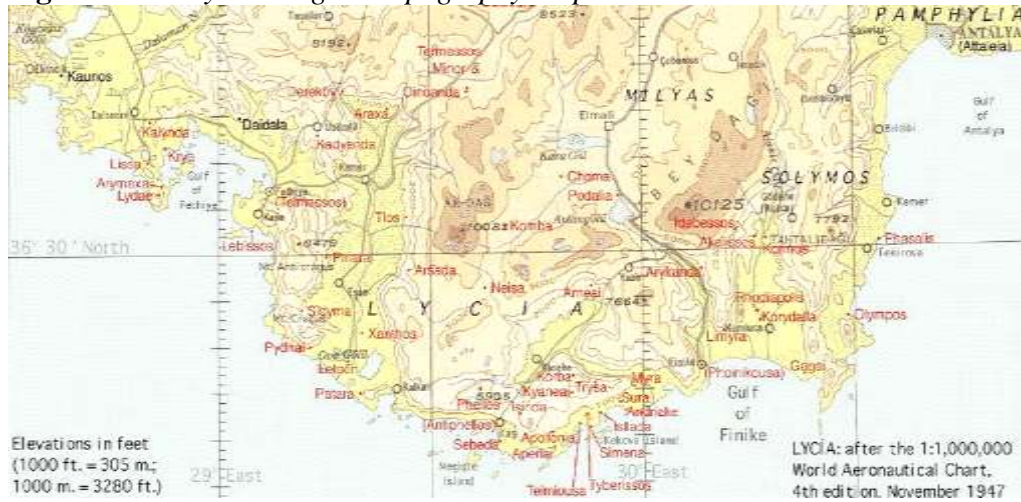
Letoon is in the district of Kumluova, 65 kilometers from Fethiye, Muğla. It represents the most unique extant architectural example of the ancient Lycian Civilization, as many inscriptions found at the site demonstrate; the federal sanctuary was the place where all religious and political decisions of the ruling powers were declared to the public (UNESCO 2020).

### *Historical Structure of Letoon and its Surroundings*

Letoon was a center for joint worship of "Eni Mahanahi", the Lycian version of Anis Massanassis and her children Ertemi and Natri, or the deities known as Leto, Artemis, and Apollo in the Hellenic religion. The earliest archaeological evidence in Letoon belongs to the end of the eighth century B.C. The arrangements made around the water, the source of life springing out of the headwaters under the ground, as well as the carving of the cliff around it and the offerings presented, testifies the ultimate attention that the Lycians paid to this spring and rocks/mountains while constituting concrete archeological evidence of a multilayered, complex and multifaceted past with an unknown baseline date. This glorious history of Letoon survived throughout the Persian rule in Western Lycia, the invasion of Alexander the Great, and the subsequent Hellenistic period, Roman and Byzantine eras. It ended probably after the Arab hegemony over Rhodes and then all around the Mediterranean world (Atik Korkmaz 2015, Letoon Excavation Archive 2017).

### *Geographical Structure of Letoon and its Surroundings*

**Figure 8.** *The Lycian Region Topography Map*



Letoon (Kumluova) is located in the Xanthos Valley, the largest of the valleys formed by the Eşen River, within a fragmentary geographical structure with delta plains between the mountains. It is an important political and religious center of



Lycia along with surrounding settlements such as Xanthos (Kınık), Patara (Ovagelemiş), Pdynai (Gavurağlı), Pınara (Minare), Sidyma (Dodurga) and Tlos (Yakaköy) (Figure 8).

Letoon is located on the foothills of Koca Tepe in the northwest of this plain, on the foot of Tümtüm Hill, a small summit extending as a ridge to the northwest. Like the other coastal settlements in the region, Letoon was also founded in the first millennium B.C. The natural environment in the time when Letoon was founded was different from that today. The geomorphological evolution of this environment is the changes in the sea levels during this time span. The depression where the plain is located was a bay in the early Holocene period and transformed into a lagoon with the alluvium brought by Eşen River. During this period, the sites of Letoon become land. The sea retreated a few meters down during the Bronze Age and this had an impact in the alluvium filling of the plain. Toward today the sea level rose again but the shoreline could not penetrate inward as before. The sondages dug at Letoon brought to light a layer of ash, which might have been caused by an eruption of the volcano at Santorini (Thera) about four thousand years ago. Today Letoon lies about six kilometers inland from the sea (Atik Korkmaz 2015, Letoon Excavation Archive 2017).

#### *Social and Economic Structure of Letoon and its Surroundings*

Letoon is located within the boundaries of the town of Kumluova. It is a rural settlement with a municipal organization. For this reason, economic activities, infrastructure facilities, and social facilities are developed in the settlement. Kumluova is administratively connected to Muğla District, but in commercial and social terms it has close relations with Fethiye district center. In Kumluova, especially the economic activity site based on greenhouse agriculture is quite wide. Therefore, immigrants mostly settle in the town in order to make this economic activity. In addition, there are also people who migrate temporarily during the production season and return to their villages at the end of the production activity. These are collaborators or workers in greenhouses. The main sector in the local economy is agriculture. The main crops grown in the town are cotton, wheat, sesame, legumes, vegetables, citrus, peanuts, and olives (UNESCO National Commission of Turkey 2009).

#### *Management Structure of Letoon and its Surroundings*

Letoon is located within the borders of Muğla Province. Therefore, on behalf of the Republic of Turkey Ministry of Culture and Tourism Muğla Governorship and Fethiye Museum Directorate are responsible for the site. It is in the administrative site of the town of Kumluova. On the other hand, the World Heritage Site is in the Patara Special Environmental Protection Area. Therefore, In addition to the Republic of Turkey Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the Republic of Turkey Ministry of Environment and Urbanization, and the Special Environmental Protection Agency are also authorized. Letoon is under the

responsibility of the Muğla Directorate of Cultural Heritage Protection Regional Board (UNESCO National Commission of Turkey 2009).

### *Features of the Letoon Sanctuary*

The Letoon Sanctuary; its influence on the Lycian and subsequent Western architecture and well-preserved inscriptions that allow partially enabling the decipherment of the Lycian language are its values (Letoon Excavation Archive 2017). The famous trilingual inscription, dating back to 337 B.C., features a text in Lycian and Greek as well as an Aramaic summary and was discovered near the temple of Apollo. In the sanctuary of Letoon, three temples are dedicated to Leto, Artemis, and Apollo. In addition, the site includes the ruins of a nymphaeum dating back to Hadrian, built on a water source that was considered sacred (UNESCO 2020).

Main phases of the layout of the sanctuary are:

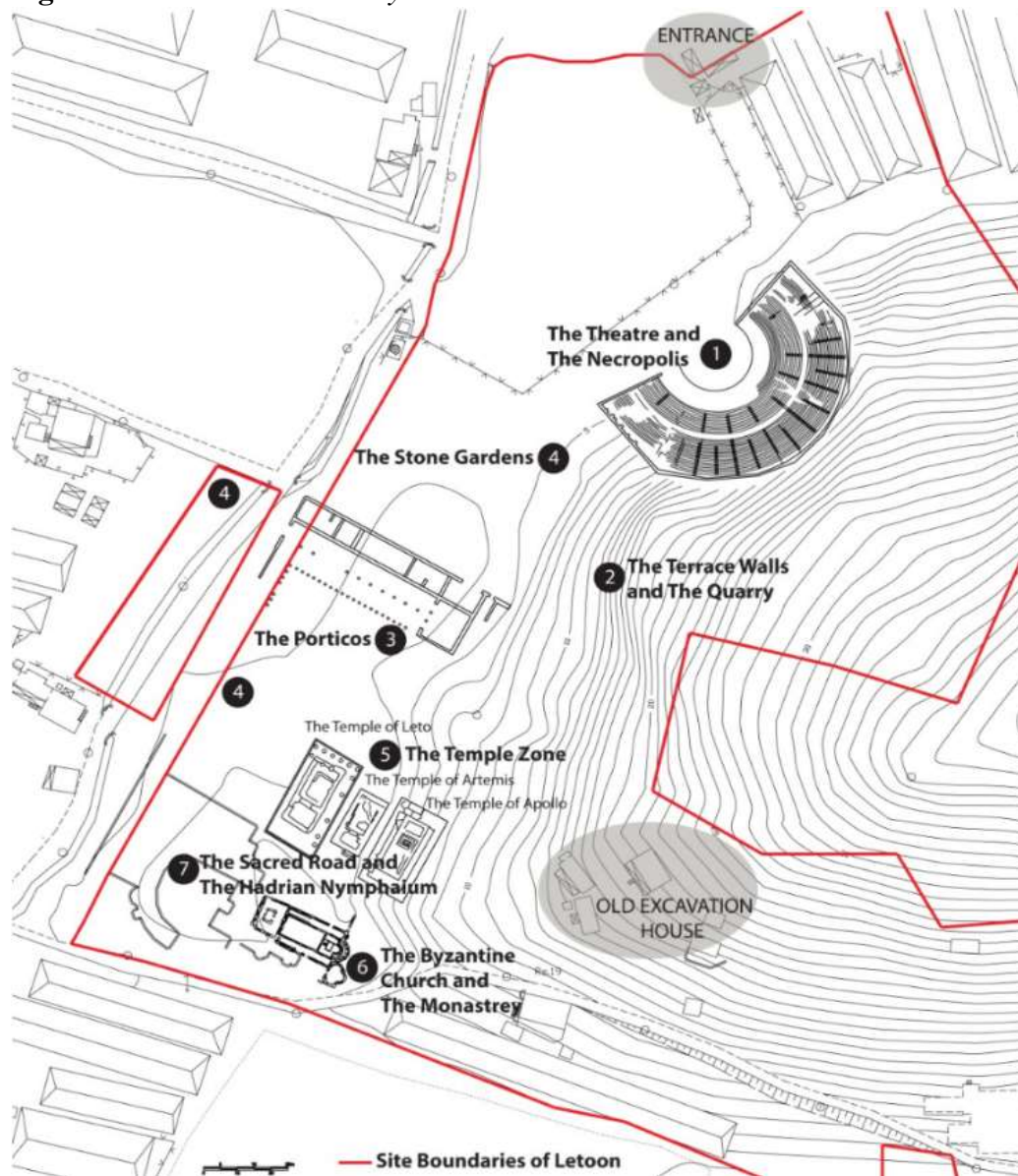
- In the Classical period, some isolated edifices were built on terraces laid out between the hill and the Sacred Spring.
- In the Greek period, temples and porticoes were erected in a regular grid.
- In the Roman period, the Nymphaeum was redesigned in baroque style.
- In the Byzantine period, a basilica was built on the altar's terrace, which dominated a site progressively covered by water.

The sanctuary was once bordered by large porticoes, where pilgrims could rest and which closed off the site. The three temples were erected on podiums, which is typical of Lycian architecture. They offered a spectacular view to pilgrims walking up the The Sacred Road from the Propylon (a monument gateway leading to the sanctuary) which was located down the platform where the temples and altars were built (Lycian Turkey 2020a) (Figure 9).

### *The Theater*

The building was built during the Hellenistic period, around the second century B.C. The total capacity of the theater is about 7,800 people. The cavea was greater than semicircle. The middle unit of the cavea was carved into the bedrock. The cavea is divided into two parts with a diazoma and has 36 sitting rows. The theater entrances or exits for the audience to or from the cavea are made with vaulted passageways or *paradoi*. The northwest vaulted passage is surrounded by Doric frieze; *tyriglyph* and *metopes* and *ionic architrave* above. The *metopes* are sculptured with 16 theater masks and faces. The southeastern vault features a Doric temple façade with triangular pediments (Letoon Excavation Archive 2017) (Figure 10).

**Figure 9.** *The Letoon Sanctuary Location Plan*



Source: Letoon Excavation Archive and Aybike Yenel's Personal Archive 2019.

**Figure 10.** *The Theatre and the Necropolis in Letoon*



Source: Aybike Yenel's Personal Archive 2019.

### *The Terrace Walls*

The terraces lie along the south slope of Tümtüm Tepe in two rows. The first terrace begins from the southeastern vaulted passageway of the theater. The terrace wall lines off in the east of the terrace, which after made two angles at two points and goes to the direction of the sanctuary. The first construction phase probably belongs to the Hellenistic period. The workmanship in this era is in roughly carved and bossaged polygonal technique. Some parts of the wall have been renovated at the Roman and Byzantine periods (Letoon Excavation Archive 2017) (Figure 11).

**Figure 11.** *The Terrace Walls in Letoon*



Source: Aybike Yenel's Personal Archive 2019.

### *The Quarry*

The whole rocky area of Tümtüm Tepe was used as a stone quarry during the Roman period. For stone extraction from the bedrock, using various methods such as levering, splitting, channeling (carving) is understood from the wedge and chisel marks on the rocks (Letoon Excavation Archive 2017).

### *The Porticos*

The porticos (stoas-collonade) surrounded the Temple shrine in the North and East. The porticos are planned in two-part; L planned north portico and west portico. The porticos, planned in Doric order, were built in the Hellenistic period. Expanded with Roman period additions during the reign of Emperor Claudius to create a double-corridor structure in Ionic order with a chamber in the northern section designed for the imperial cult. Heavily damaged by earthquakes during the Roman Imperial period, this structure was repaired by a donation of 30.000 denarii by Opromoas, the famous benefactor from Rhodiapolis (Letoon Excavation Archive 2017) (Figure 12).

**Figure 12.** *The Porticos in Letoon*

Source: Aybike Yenel's Personal Archive 2019.

### *The Stone Gardens*

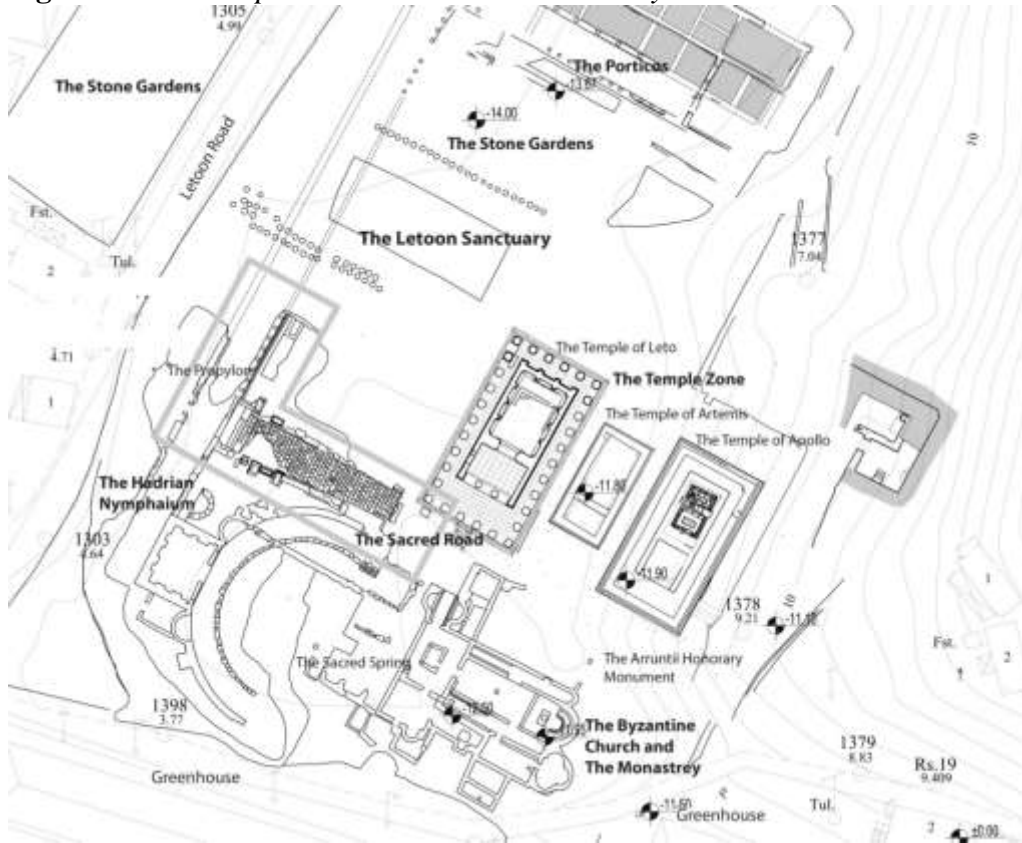
The stone station in archaeological sites is the areas where the collapsed architectural elements of a building are exhibited; after they have been identified and numbered for an inventory before restoration. In Letoon, eight stone situations have been arranged. Six of them belong to the Temple of Leto, in which 80% of the architectural elements still exist on the side, the Hadrian Monumental Fountain, the Temenos Wall, and the Byzantine Church (Letoon Excavation Archive, 2017) (Figure 13).

**Figure 13.** *The Stone Gardens in Letoon*

Source: Aybike Yenel's Personal Archive 2019.

### *The Temenos*

The hearth of the known ruins of Letoon comprises the sacred spring and the temenos, which contains the temples built for Leto, Artemis, and Apollo. From other areas, stoas in the north and west were separated by huge bedrock trimmed in the east and the Hellenistic wall, and the entrance to the area was provided with propylon in the west (Letoon Excavation Archive 2017) (Figure 14).

**Figure 14.** *The Temple Zone in the Letoon Sanctuary Location Plan*

Source: Letoon Excavation Archive and Aybike Yenel's Personal Archive 2019.

### *The Temple of Leto*

The Temple of Leto is one of the best-preserved temples in the world, as the 80% of its architectural blocks has reached our time. It is the largest temple of the area with dimensions of 15.75x32.25 meters and is located nearest to the sacred spring. It is a peripteros with a deep pronaos (entrance) surrounded by 30 columns in the Ionic order. The Corinthian semi-capitals which were used on the plasters (half columns) are added on interior cella walls during the Roman period (Letoon Excavation Archive 2017) (Figure 15).

**Figure 15.** *The Temple of Leto in Letoon*

Source: Aybike Yenel's Personal Archive 2019.

*The Temple of Artemis*

The structure, measuring 9.5x18.5 meters located in the middle is the worst preserved among the three temples. Constructed in the Ionian order, the structure is considered to have a layout of templum in antis and attributed to Ertemiti/Artemis based on the two inscriptions found at its entrance. The Ionic element of the structure has outstandingly elegant stone workmanship. Based on the inscription of Erbbina/Arbinas, the second construction phase of the structure is dated to the early fourth century B.C. (Letoon Excavation Archive 2017) (Figure 16).

**Figure 16.** *The Temple of Artemis in Letoon*



Source: Aybike Yenel's Personal Archive 2019.

*The Temple of Apollo*

The Temple is located right next to the spectacular cliff smoothed by carving on the easternmost side of the temenos. The temple at 27.95x15.07 meters, it rises on a crepidoma with three-stepped krepis. The final phase is a peripteros with 6x11 columns. An early temple of 4.9x7.6 meters, built of wood on a stone foundation found here before the construction of the temple, is still in situ in the temple of the Hellenistic Temple (Letoon Excavation Archive, 2017) (Figure 17).

**Figure 17.** *The Temple of Apollo in Letoon*



Source: Aybike Yenel's Personal Archive 2019.

### *The Byzantine Church*

Early Christian Church of Letoon is set on the sacred site as a part of the monastery. The basilica which has three naves was built using local limestone and spolia blocks. Floors of the middle and side naves are decorated with botanical and geometrical mosaics which includes animal motives as well. On the southeast corner of the church, a baptistery is located with a trikonkhos (three-leaved clover shaped) plan (Letoon Excavation Archive 2017) (Figure 18).

**Figure 18.** *The Byzantine Church and the Monastery in Letoon*



Source: Aybike Yenel's Personal Archive 2019.

### *The Sacred Road*

A propylon in the north of the Hadrian Fountain lies on towards the sanctuary from the west. The archaeological remains still are remarkable today. The stone-paved the Sacred Road lies from the propylon to the Arruntii Monument. At this point, it is lined off by many inscriptions and sculpture bases at both sides. It goes on in front of the temples and across between bedrock and Apollon Temple along the terraces (Letoon Excavation Archive 2017).

### *The Hadrian Nymphaeum*

A monumental fountain dedicated to Emperor Hadrian is on the southwest side of the sanctuary. The building was built during the Roman period. The fountain has a semi-circular pool surrounded by a portico. Its upper structure mostly preserved. In the middle of the portico, there is a square planned niche dedicated to the Emperor Hadrianus. In the east of the pool, there is a sacred spring on the same axle with square niche. The elements that signify the worship area include the sacred spring associated with the spring cult goddesses, who were first called "ali(ya)" in Luwian, then "eliyana" in Lycian, "hwrnys" in Aramaic and finally "nymphs" in the ancient Greek. The spring's used for the ritual cleansing feature since ancient times (Letoon Excavation Archive 2017) (Figure 19).



**Figure 19.** *The Sacred Road and the Hadrian Nymphaeum in Letoon*

Source: Aybike Yenel's Personal Archive 2019.

### *The Old Excavation House*

The Xanthos excavation team stayed in the old village houses in 1951 on the southwest side of the sanctuary. The old excavation house, which is within the first degree protected area, has a property problem situation and does not have a title deed (Figure 20).

**Figure 20.** *The Old Excavation House in Letoon*

Source: Aybike Yenel's Personal Archive 2019.

## **Discussion**

### *Current Status, Opportunities, and Problems of the Letoon Sanctuary*

Within the scope of the study, the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the site were uncovered by SWOT analysis conducted to determine the current situation in the Letoon Sanctuary and its surroundings. In order to determine the potentials; literature collection, observation in the field, interviews with Fethiye Museum Directorate, documents and data obtained from web sites and archives were used as material. Planning and design proposals will be developed by taking into account the results of this analysis (Table 8).

**Table 8.** SWOT Analysis of the Letoon Sanctuary and its Surrounding

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Historical cultural richness</li> <li>-Having original archaeological structures</li> <li>-The Letoon Environmental Design Project</li> <li>-Visitor reception center, parking and road arrangement</li> <li>-No serious security issues</li> <li>-Determination of sightseeing routes</li> <li>-Making promotional materials and information boards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Although it is on the World Heritage List, has no recognition in Turkey</li> <li>-Lack of management plan</li> <li>-A low number of visitors and tourists</li> <li>-The groundwater level of the area is high</li> <li>-The boundary of the area with greenhouses, residences, and businesses</li> <li>-No significant investment in tourism is available in Kumluova</li> <li>-No museum where the finds from the excavations in the area can be exhibited</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Being on the UNESCO World Heritage List</li> <li>-Being on the Lycian Way route</li> <li>-Effecting on Lycia and later on Western architecture</li> <li>-Having well-preserved inscriptions that allow partial understanding of Lycian</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Risk of groundwater coming to the surface</li> <li>-Greenhouse activity in the region</li> </ul>

In the Letoon Sanctuary, an environmental design project including a multi-purpose hall, cafeteria, sales shop, toilets, box office, tourniquet, as well as many functions such as sightseeing routes, walkways, and recreation areas, has been prepared in 2014. The Letoon Environmental Design Project was completed during the tourist season in 2016 (KVMGM 2015) (Figure 21).

**Figure 21.** The Letoon Environmental Design Project Location Plan

Source: KVMGM 2015.

The necessary infrastructure work (parking lot, road arrangement, visitor reception center) was carried out with the Letoon Environmental Design Project, and it was emphasized that the area is on the World Heritage List. Parking is available for visitors to Letoon, and there are signs providing access to the area. The boundaries of Letoon have been determined and surrounded by wire mesh. The area has no serious security problems. The promotion of the area, which indicates that the area is on the World Heritage List, is made in Turkish and English. There are information signs on the walkways that guide transportation and a route arranged so that visitors can navigate within a certain plan and program. The facilities available for visitors and tourists at Letoon are sufficient (Figure 22).

**Figure 22.** *Visitor Reception Center in Letoon*



Source: Aybike Yenel's Personal Archive 2019.

Kumluova is a rural settlement. There is no significant investment in tourism in the region, where the World Heritage Site is located. Local people are reluctant to deal with tourism due to the income generated by greenhouses. The area borders with greenhouses, residences, and businesses. Due to the high groundwater level in Letoon, the base of a part of the area is filled with water. As a result of this situation, some of the works unearthed during excavations in Letoon are underwater and a large section is covered with plants. Although the Letoon Environmental Design Project has attempted to solve this problem, the problem still remains in the area even though the accumulating water level has decreased (Figure 23).

**Figure 23.** *Groundwater Level of Letoon*



Source: Aybike Yenel's Personal Archive 2019.

In addition, there is no museum where the finds found in excavations at the World Heritage site can be exhibited. Therefore, the finds are exhibited in Antalya and Fethiye museums. One of Letoon's outstanding universal values is the Trilingual inscription-trilingue was written in Lyki, Aramaic and Ancient Greek, which was found in 1973 and is exhibited in the Fethiye Museum today (Atik Korkmaz 2015, Letoon Excavation Archive 2017) (Figure 24).

**Figure 24.** *Letoon Trilingual Inscription in Fethiye Museum*



Source: Aybike Yenel's Personal Archive 2019.

In accordance with the international obligations arising from the World Heritage Convention, signed in 1972, Letoon periodic reporting is made to be submitted to the World Heritage Center every six years. However, no program has been prepared to monitor, control the effects of existing applications and determine whether they are successful or not (UNESCO National Commission of Turkey 2009).

## Conclusion

In the light of surveys conducted in the Letoon Sanctuary and the Lycian Way surroundings, a number of suggestions have been developed within the scope of the thesis to increase the tourism potential of these areas and to ensure the conservation and presentation of archaeological structures.

- The Lycian Way will be staged for the revitalization of Letoon.
- Environmental Design Project and the visitor route within the boundaries of Letoon Archeological Site will be revitalized according to the analysis.
- An architectural program belonging to the vernacular buildings and building groups existing within the boundaries of the site will be re-functioned.

- The strategies and projects will be developed to increase the consciousness of the local people which do not have enough information about the World Heritage Site.
- The strategies and projects will be developed to ensure that the local people have economic benefit from the World Heritage Site.

Although the Letoon Sanctuary contains important archaeological remains and it is on the Lycian Way, it is not much known and not frequently preferred by local and foreign tourists, because it is not widely promoted nationally and internationally. So, Site management strategies in Letoon as UNESCO World Heritage Sites should be:

- Targeted with an interdisciplinary approach to various issues related to the protection, presentation, and management of cultural heritage.
- Cooperation between institutions and field presidency.
- Planned, taking into consideration the maintenance; excavation and restoration works in the area, as a part of the site presentation.
- Determined according to the cultural infrastructure and educational level of the visitors coming to the site. In order to ensure the proper presentation, the integrity of the site should be considered as the most appropriate way to make the site inviting.

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