*Archaelogical Resources and Sustainability: A case study of tourism in the ancient ruins of Thebes*

## Summary of the Case

This case study describes the ancient ruins of Thebes, Egypt and focuses on the intersection between tourism and archeology at this unique archeological site. Due to tourists' interests in exploring culture and history, archaeological resources are a part of the tourism sector. Tourism brings in money and can help to preserve the sites overall and yet, as tourists explore archaeological resources, specifically sites and ruins, the sites can be adversely affected. This case discusses how increasing tourism and related human activities are affecting the archaeological ruins of Thebes and poses the dilemma that tourism brings to the site. Recommendations based on sustainable tourism principles are made with regard to policies and regulations that could help to protect these archaeological sites from the negative effects of tourism in order to sustain these unique resources. Challenges for the future of tourism and to the ruins themselves are presented.

## Teaching and Learning Objectives

Below are the teaching and learning objectives for this case.

1.  **Teaching Objective**: Provide students with an opportunity to gain an understanding of the connections between archaeology and tourism, within the broader context of heritage and sustainable tourism.
    **Learning Objective:** Students will be able to describe and illustrate examples of archaeological tourism, heritage tourism, and sustainable tourism.

2.  **Teaching Objective:** Offer students information about current issues related to tourism that are facing Thebes, an example of a unique archaeological site frequented by tourists.
    **Learning Objective:** Students will be able to describe the current tourism-related issues at Thebes.

    The case achieves this objective via:

    *   Providing up to date information about Thebes from a variety of sources
    *   Presenting information about some of the considerations and issues that the site's management team needs to focus on as tourists continue to visit Thebes.

3.  **Teaching Objective:** Encourage student discussion regarding tourism-archaeology interactions, sustainable tourism, and heritage tourism, specifically at Thebes, and in general.
    **Learning Objective:** Students will be able to analyze and evaluate tourism-archaeology connections and broader heritage tourism interactions, noting that Thebes is one of several places where tourists interact with archaeological resources around

the globe and students may wish to explore other places where tourism, archaeology, sustainability, and heritage intersect.

## Suitability for Use

This case is suitable for use by instructors and students in upper level undergraduate and graduate courses related to tourism in general, heritage tourism, archaeology, and sustainability. It is useful in instructional environments where the instructor wishes to provide students with opportunities to enhance their knowledge of tourism's impact on archaeological sites and on the sustainability of those sites.

## Sources and Methods of Collecting Information for the Case

Information for this case was collected from written work including website materials, books, and articles related to the topics presented in the case study.

## Teaching Approach and Suggested Sequence of Timeframe

Instructors may use this case in a number of ways. The case may be used in the following contexts: as an individual assignment; as a group assignment; as a combination assignment or activity that includes both individual and group activity; as a class discussion tool. If used as an individual assignment, students can read the case and answer the discussion questions in writing. The case could be assigned as a project to complete in one week or as a term-long project. If used as a class assignment, students could read the case outside of class for homework. Then, after students have individually considered the case, in a classroom setting, students could share their answers and ideas in a face-to-face setting or in an online discussion board format. Students could also be asked to find other heritage sites that involve archaeology as an additional learning activity. If used in a group setting, student groups could discuss the questions in their small groups and answer them collectively and then share their findings and ideas with the class.

The following questions might be asked to facilitate a general discussion on the topics of heritage tourism, archaeology and tourism, and sustainable tourism.

Questions to Generate Interest

*   What is heritage tourism?
*   What is sustainability?
*   What is sustainable tourism?
*   What are the connections between archaeology and tourism?
*   What the benefits of heritage tourism, in general and at

**Figure 1**

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## Suggested Teaching Scenario

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| Pre-Session 1 | Teacher leads an introduction to heritage tourism and archaeology and links to sustainability (length can vary depending on the students' background, the course, and the time the instructor wishes to spend on the case, perhaps 1-3 hour timeframe) |
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| Session 1 | Teacher can present the case assignment in the first class session (1-3 hour timeframe) |
| Pre-classwork home work | Students read the case and write answers to the discussion questions (provide 1 week or more as desired) |
| Session 2 | In small groups students discuss their individual answers (recommend 1-2 hours) |
| Additional homework | Based on small group discussions, students revise their answers and create group presentations (can do in a class session or out of class as a project of 1-2 weeks or more depending on depth desired) |
| Session 3 | Student groups present their findings (2-3 hour session recommended) |
| Session 4—follow-up | Students discuss the class as a whole group (not in small groups, 1 hour suggested) |

archaeological sites?

- What are the potential drawbacks of heritage tourism, in general and at archaeological sites?

A possible teaching sequence is presented in Figure 1.

## Questions and Answers for Discussion

1. *This case study focused on the adverse effects of tourism on the ancient ruins of Thebes. Discuss two factors affecting the sustainability of the ancient ruins of Thebes.*

   Answers may vary. One of the factors affecting sustainability at the ancient ruins of Thebes is urban development. As the modern-city of Luxor continues to expand and grow, the development of the city is encroaching on the ancient ruins of Thebes. The encroachment of city development can damage and destroy archaeological and cultural resources, decreasing the sustainability of the ancient ruins of Thebes. A second factor affecting the ancient ruins of Thebes is a lack of a comprehensive site management plan. The absence of a site management plan at Thebes contributes to the lack of sustainable initiatives and monitoring at the ancient ruins of Thebes. If a management plan was implemented at the ancient ruins of Thebes it could increase the stability of the site.

2. *Managers of archaeology projects at the ancient ruins of Thebes strive to implement sustainable tourism practices. Discuss potential sustainable practices that can be implemented at archaeological sites and other historical or environmentally sensitive tourism attractions before they are opened to the public?*

   Answers may vary. One practice that can be implemented before tourists visit archaeological sites is staging a stress test to evalu-

ate sustainable practices. Before the initial opening of the site, site managers and employees could invite guests to the site for a soft opening to evaluate sustainable practices. Any issues identified during the stress test can be corrected or improved. Another practice that could be implemented before opening the site to the public is recording the conservation condition of the site. It is important for the conservation status of the ancient ruins of Thebes to be documented and addressed before opening the site to the public. Additionally, any conservation issues and concerns can be stabilized before further damage and degradation occur at the site. A daily and weekly monitoring system should be implemented before opening to establish how long-term monitoring of the site will occur.

3. *How can the management staff at Thebes engage tourists and the public in sustainable initiatives to preserve the ancient ruins of Thebes?*

   Answers may vary. Management staff at Thebes can engage tourists and the public in sustainable initiatives to preserve the ancient ruins by hosting fundraising campaigns, creating conservation outreach programs, and providing tours highlighting conservation techniques used at the ancient ruins of Thebes. Management staff could reach out to visitors and residents of local communities to encourage fundraising efforts to conserve and preserve the ancient ruins of Thebes. The fundraisers could be annual or monthly and include promotions on local media outlets and donation boxes on site. Participants would know that all proceeds go toward conserving the ancient ruins of Thebes. Conservation outreach programs could include daily posts on social media, conservation discussions in the local com-

munity, and periodic workshops where visitors and residents of local communities could engage in hands-on conservation techniques. Specialized tours for viewing conservation methods in-use can provide tourists with an idea of how conservation and sustainable techniques are implemented on site.

4. *What role does human population growth play in sustainability at the ancient ruins of Thebes and potentially at other similar types of attractions?*

   Answers may vary. Human population growth impacts sustainability at the ancient ruins of Thebes through urban development. As the human population in the modern-city of Luxor continues to grow, development will lead to damage and destruction of the ancient ruins of Thebes. Encroaching human population growth will cause the ruins to become unstable and archaeological resources to be lost and therefore, unavailable for future exploration and research.

5. *Who should be responsible for creating sustainable tourism initiatives at the ancient ruins of Thebes and why?*

   Answers may vary. Site management and local and federal governments are the main entities responsible for creating sustainable tourism at the ancient ruins of Thebes. The local and federal governments are responsible for creating initiatives and policies that serve as guidelines and regulations that should be abided by and implemented on site. The federal and local governments can also provide funding for sustainable initiatives at the ruins. Site managers are responsible for creating, maintaining, and monitoring sustainable initiatives on site. Site management team members would know the conservation needs and issues at the ancient ruins of Thebes, and would be responsible for making sure the site is stabilized and sustainable.

6. *Think of a strategy to address one of the sustainability issues, related to tourism that is discussed in the case study. Outline how the strategy works, policies or legislation needed to implement the strategy, and why the strategy is important to the sustainability of the archaeological site.*

   Answers may vary. One strategy to address sustainability issues at the ancient ruins of Thebes is to have scheduled introduction sessions for visitors every fifteen minutes within the hour. The strategy would address human interaction between visitors and site ruins by going over the guidelines before visitors can tour the ruins. Not all visitors will participate in guided tours, therefore, the introduction sessions before tourists can tour the ancient ruins will ensure tourists hear touring policies and behaviors before touring the ruins. The strategy would require site employees to be trained and to learn about site policies and behavior. Employees at site ticket booths will need to inform guests about information sessions, unless they participate in a guided tour, and stipulate that the information session is required before entering the site. Informing tourists about site policies and behaviors will make sure visitors understand the need for protecting the site.

7. *Discuss why partnerships between management at the ancient ruins of Thebes, the local community, and local and state government are important for the development of sustainable tourism practices at Thebes.*

   Partnerships between management at the ancient ruins of Thebes, the local community, and local and state government are important for sustainable tourism practices at Thebes because these entities contribute functions that are necessary for protecting the site's sustainability. Local and State government can support the sustainability of the site by providing funding, implementing policies and regulations such as zoning, creating legislation to protect the site, and commissioning state organizations and boards focused on tourism and sustainability. Involving the local community in sustainable tourism would engage the community in protecting the ancient ruins of Thebes by having residents actively participate in policies to protect the site, partner with the site to initiate new ideas about sustainability, and monitor the state of the site. Management at the site can inform local communities and local and state governments about the state of the ruins in addition to ensuring that sustainable policies and practices are followed every day.

8. *Consider sustainable tourism initiatives being financed by a fee attached to the purchase of entry tickets to the Thebes. Would charging tourists an additional fee to protect the integrity of the Thebes be fair and ethical? Why or why not?*

   Answers may vary. Charging tourists an additional fee to protect the integrity of the ancient ruins of Thebes could be seen as fair and ethical. The fee should be fair in cost to the tourists. The fee would be ethical because its purpose will be disclosed to tourists upon buying the ticket. It is the ethical obligation of site managers and operators to conserve the ancient ruins of the Thebes. Tourists' contributions to site conservation, through a nominal fee, safeguard the site from future damage.

9. *Do you think touring the ancient ruins of Thebes should be limited in the future? Explain.*

   Answers may vary. A thoughtful view would be one that notes that touring the ancient ruins of Thebes should be limited in the future with regard to the number of tourists allowed into the sites each day. Limiting the number of tourists each day will limit the amount of human impact such as overcrowding and abrasion caused by humans within structures. Limiting tourism allows for continual tourist visitation while protecting the conservation and stability of the ancient ruins of Thebes.

10. *There are many stakeholders in Thebes. What suggestions do you have for meeting the needs of all interested parties including visitors, the host community, and the archaeologists? Justify your recommendations.*

Answers may vary. Some answers may focus more heavily on the preservation of the ruins while others might attend more to the needs of the residents and business owners. A thoughtful answer will probably seek a balanced consideration of the triple bottom line of sustainable tourism that includes economic, environmental, and socio-cultural aspects of sustainability.

## Suggestions for Using the Additional Learning Activities

- *Research three different archaeological sites in different regions of the world and discuss sustainable tourism issues and initiatives at these archaeological sites.*
  Students can select from sites around the globe. Possible sites that could offer additional insights into the connections between archaeology and tourism include Macchu Picchu in Peru, Petra in Jordan, and Angkor Wat in Cambodia. Students could complete this project individually or in groups and compare and contrast the sustainable tourism policies and practices at the sites.
- *Think of a strategy to address one of the sustainability issues related to tourism that is discussed in the case study. Outline how the strategy works, policies or legislation needed to implement the strategy, and why the strategy is important to the sustainability of the archaeological site.*
  Students can complete this activity individually or in groups and can pursue it as a discussion topic or as the basis for a more in-depth project.  Issues to address might be items such as crowding, physical degradation of a site, adverse impacts on local communities, lack of funding, etc. The manual by Pederson (2002) that is suggested as an additional reading material may provide insights into this learning activity.
- *Create marketing and educational tools that would assist sustainability efforts targeted at visitors to archaeological sites.*
  Students can complete this activity individually or in groups and can pursue it as a course project. Topics to consider include the significance of archaeology and archaeological sites to the understanding of history, culture, and art; the importance of heritage tourism to the preservation of the sites; and issues involved in tourism at the site, including crowding, physical degradation of a site, adverse impacts on local communities, lack of funding, etc.

## Additional Information about the Case

### *Definitions*

In addition to the definitions provided within the case, the following definitions may be useful.

### *Archaeology*

"Archaeology is the study of the ancient and recent human past through material remains. It is a subfield of anthropology, the study of all human culture. From million-year-old fossilized remains of our earliest human ancestors in Africa, to 20th century buildings in present-day New York City, archaeology analyzes the physical remains of the past in pursuit of a broad and comprehensive understanding of human culture" (Society for American Archaeology (SAA) (n.d.).

### *Archaeological Sites*

"An archaeological site is any place where physical remains of past human activities exist" (Society for American Archaeology (SAA) (n.d.).

### *Further Information about the Archaeological Sites*

### *Archaeology at Ancient Thebes*

The rediscovery of Thebes can be traced back to Napoleon Bonaparte's expedition in Egypt during the 18th century. After Napoleon's expedition, a publication known as Description del L'Egypte (written by Vivant Denon and published in 1809) reproduced the scientific details of monuments in drawings (Sturdwick & Sturdwick, 1999). Publications such as Description del L'Egypte prompted the collection and exploration of Egyptian antiquities, specifically by antiquitors such as Belzoni, a well-known Italian explorer of the 19th century (Sturdwick & Sturdwick 1999).

Early excavations included that of A.H. Rhind in 1856-1857, which focused on the discovery of the Ptolemaic tomb of Mantuzaf (Sturdwick & Sturdwick, 1999). Archaeologist Fliders Petrie did not conduct much archaeology in the area; however, he did conduct archaeology at a small temple in 1895 and1896 and Edouard Naville worked with the Egypt Exploration Fund at Dier el-Bahari to clean up and document the temple of Hatshepsut from 1907 until 1938 (Sturdwick & Sturdwick, 1999).  In addition, archaeologists from New York City's Metropolitan Museum of Art's Egyptian Expedition conducted work at Assasif and surrounding areas. Furthermore, Lord Carnarvon hired Howard Carter, who discovered the tomb of Tutankhamun (Biography.com, 2016.). Archaeological excavations have been conducted over the decades and new archaeological information is being discovered yearly.

### *Thebes*

The ancient ruins of Thebes served as the capital of political and religious life from 1570-1690 BCE and it was an important worship center for the god Amon. The nomarchs and pharaohs of Egypt funneled

wealth and prosperity into Egypt, contributing to the expansion of temple complexes in Thebes, but it began to decline 670 BCE. Thebes experienced damage and destruction by subsequent political campaigns and rulers, including Assyrians and Romans. During Roman rule, Thebes served as a center outpost near the southern part of the city (Gates & Appiah, 2010). The four main general areas are known as The Temple of Luxor, The Temple of Karnak, and cultural sites on the West Bank, including The Valley of the Kings and the Valley of the Queens.

- The Temple of Luxor. The Temple of Luxor, now referred to as the Luxor Temple, is located in the center of the modern city of Luxor on the East Bank of the Nile (Sturdwick & Sturdwick 1999) and dates to the 18th dynasty (Drower, 2009). It was built by Amenhotep III and Rameses II. (Darvill, 2009) and referred to as "the Southern Opet" by Egyptians. The temple served as a center for the Opet Festival that played an important role in "maintaining the role of the King as the divine offspring of the state god" (Sturdwick & Sturdwick 1999, p.67). The Temple of Luxor was connected to the temples of Karnak and Mut by an avenue of sphinxes (Polz, 2001); a processional way connects Luxor to Karnak, which is also located next to the Nile River.
- Karnak Temple Complex. The Karnak Temple Complex, also known as Ipet-Isu, which means "most select of places" in ancient Egyptian, is located at the northern end of the city of Luxor on the East Bank of the Nile. Karnak contains several temples within a perimeter wall and is one of the largest temple complexes in the world. The temple dates to the 13th dynasty, roughly 2702-2170 BC, and buildings in the temple complex are dedicated to gods and other purposes. The main building is dedicated to the god Ptah, the principal god of the capital at Memphis. Temples are also devoted to the gods Khonsu and Mut; additional smaller shrines are also located at Karnak (Drower & Dorman, 2015; Sturdwick & Sturdwick, 1999).
- The West Bank Area. The West Bank Area of ancient Thebes contains numerous ancient ruins and many of these are popular tourist attractions. These include the Valley of the Kings that contains tombs of Egyptian kings and the Valley of the Queens, a royal burial ground for Egyptian queens. (Drower & Dorman, 2014). The West Bank also includes Dra Abu el-Maga, the burial place for 17th-20th dynasty kings and cemetery for the non-elite population of the New Kingdom; Deir el-Bahari that includes the mortuary temple of Queen Hatshepsut; and Medinet Habut that contains mortuary temples for Sety I, Ramasses II (The Ramesseum), and Ramesses III (Polz, 2001).

## Suggestions for Additional Reading Material

Archaeological Institute of America website (https://www.archaeological.org/)

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