

Presentation and interpretation of archaeological sites.
Between social commitment and scholarly understanding.

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An effort to promote understanding of a site is a two way street. On the one hand, a site that is well understood encourages people to preserve it. On the other, eliciting meaning for others, even the occasional others, raises the archaeologist's awareness for meaning "tout court."

As for the first point. Pride in one's heritage is the best guarantee against looting, or even simply casual damaging. But such pride can only derive from an understanding of the intrinsic value of a site. Archaeological ruins are not always immediately evocative of grandeur, hence education is as critical a component as conservation and reconstruction.

The second point is the reverse of the coin. As scholars, we are not engaged in empty advertising. We don't make up meaning, we find it. And any effort to convey it to others – from peasants to politicians – helps us see it in a different light. Culture is a continuum not only because it can be explained, but because the explanation rebounds on the explainer.