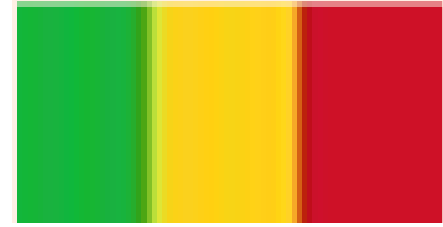




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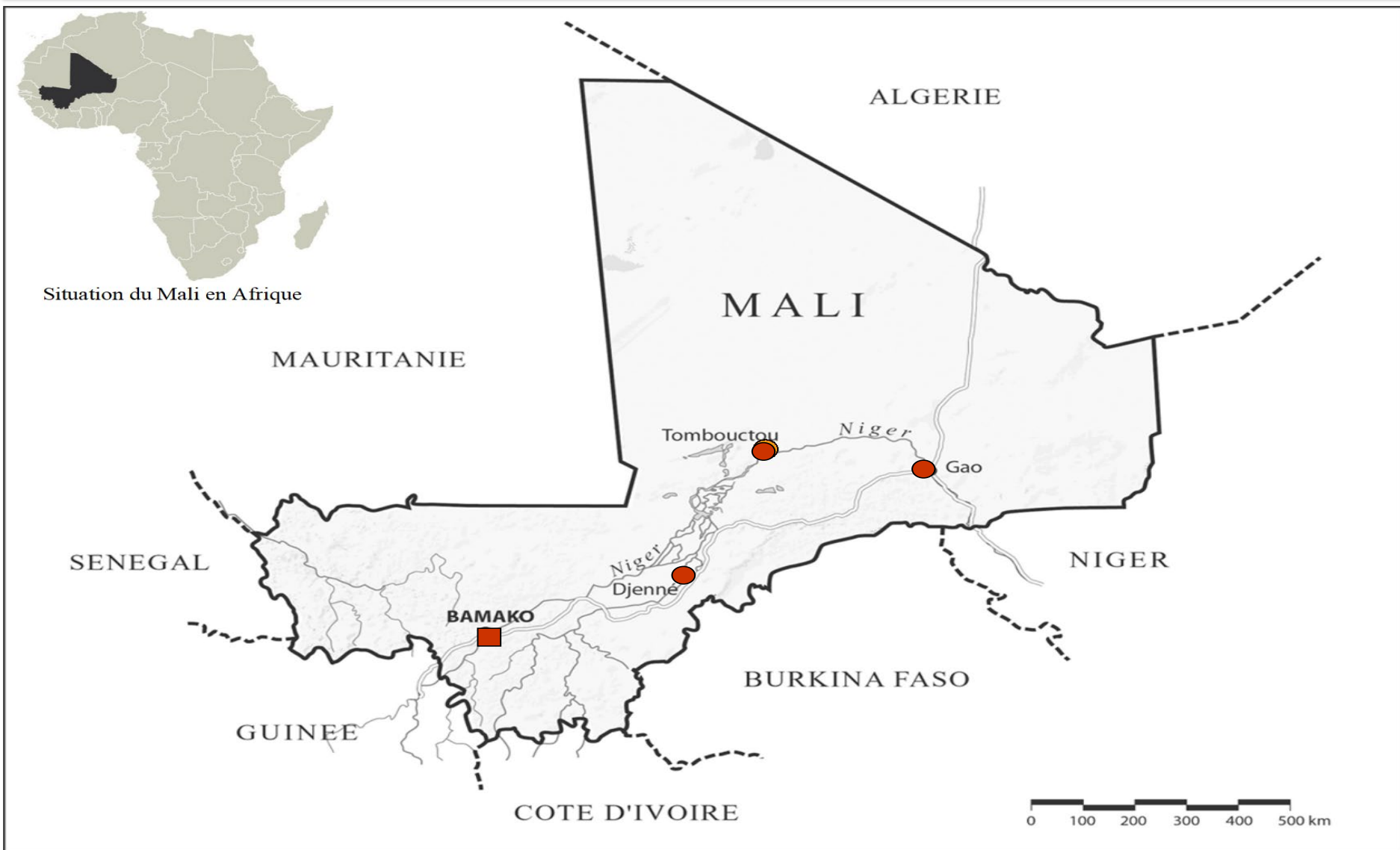
Management of a cultural site in times of crisis: case study of Tomb of Askia in Gao, Mali

Mamadou SAMAKE, Chair of the National
Committee of the Blue Shield in Mali

Presentation plan

- Tomb of Askia
- Involvement of the local community in the protection of the Tomb of Askia
- Support of the international community
- Support of the national Committee of the Blue Shield in Mali
- Conclusion

Mali - Africa, location of the city of Gao in Mali



Introduction to the Tomb of Askia

- Based in Gao, former capital of the Songhoy Empire (XV –XVIth), the tomb of Askia symbolises power, wealth and magnificence of the Songhoy Empire.
- Built by Askia Mohamed, Emperor of the Songhoy empire in 1495, the tomb of Askia is a living site.
- Traditional maintenance practices and cultural activities strengthen ties amongst the members of the community.

Introduction to the Tomb of Askia

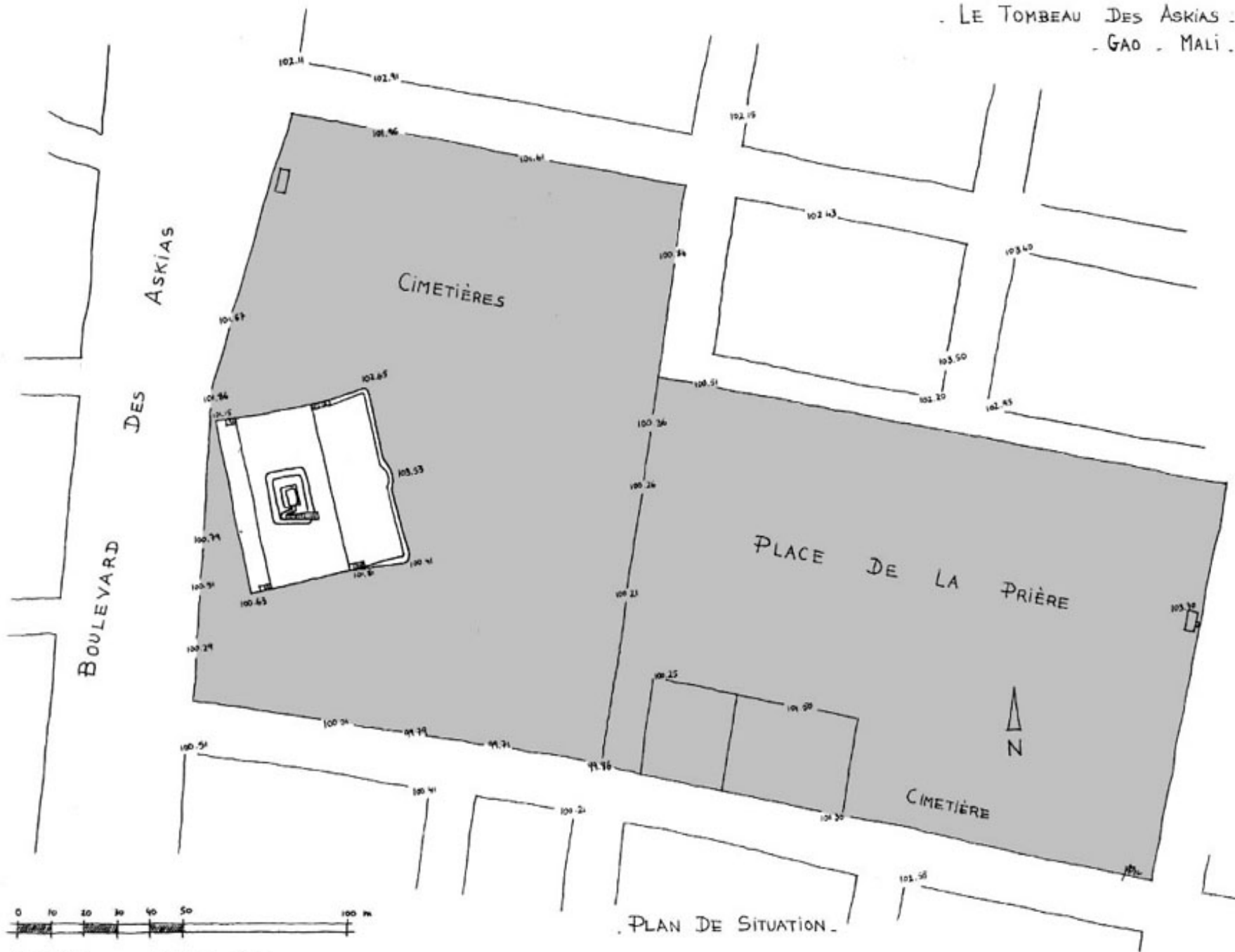
- The site of Askia tomb was awarded national heritage site in 2003,
- In 2004, it was inscribed on the World Heritage List through the criteria II, III et IV,
- In 2012 after the outbreak of the conflict, the head of the state of Mali requested the inscription of the site on the List of on the List of World Heritage in Danger,
- In December 2016, it was inscribed on the List of Cultural Property under Enhanced Special Protection (Second Protocol of the Hague Convention 1954).

Components of the Tomb of Askia

The Tomb of Askia consists of a number of elements:

- The pyramidal tower
- Two mosques (prayer spaces for men and women),
- A necropolis,
- A buffer zone (including the Place of the White Stone)

LE TOMBEAU DES ASKIAS :
GAO - MALI.



PLAN DE SITUATION.

Involvement of the local community in the protection of the Tomb of Askia (1/2)

- The involvement of the local community in the protection of the cultural heritage prevented the destruction of the Tomb of Askia by armed groups during the occupation of the north region.
- The local community is involved in all activities of protection and improvement through the management committee of the Site.

Involvement of the local community in the protection of the Tomb of Askia (2/2)

- The local community has been physically and materially contributing to the annual parking repairs,
- Assumes the invoices of water and electricity, cleaning and security of the site (guarding),
- Has actively participated to the drafting of the plan for the conservation and management of the Tomb of Askia, 2018 – 2022.

Parging repairs of the Tomb of Askia in 2018



Support of the international community (1/2)

- In 2014, a joint mission ICOMOS, World Heritage Centre, CRATerre and the Ministry of Culture of Mali **assessed the state of conservation of the Tomb of Askia,**
- With the financial support of UNESCO and the State of Mali, the **local community was mobilised to resume maintenance works** of the Tomb of Askia,
- In 2016, UNESCO financed a report on the state of conservation of the property in order to **identify funding sources for the rehabilitation works.**

Support of the international community (2/2)

- In 2016, the Administrative Committee for the Convention 1954 inscribed the Tomb of Askia on the List of Cultural Property under Enhanced Special Protection
- In 2019, ALIPH financed the rehabilitation project of the Tomb of Askia,
- In 2020, the African World Heritage Fund financed a full rehabilitation project including the documentation of the graves of historical significance.

Signing of the enhanced protection



Support of the national Committee of the Blue Shield in Mali (1/2)

Officially acknowledged by the International Committee of the Blue Shield, the 18 February 2021, the National Committee in Mali:

- Participated to the drafting of the booklet on african national committees, financed by the german committee of the Blue Shield,
- Contributed to raising the defence and security forces' awareness on the protection of cultural properties in conflict zones,
- Organised guided tours on the site in collaboration with the Management Committee of the Tomb of Askia.

Support of the national Committee of the Blue Shield in Mali (2/2)

- Organized the International Day of the African World Heritage at the Tomb of Askia, 5 May 2023.
- Reached out the local community members more specifically youngsters and school children to participate to the protection of the cultural heritage, during vacation courses organized by the National Union for Education and Culture, Gao section.

Visit of the Commander of the German Contingent at the Tomb of Askia



Delivery of the brochure to the National Director of the Cultural Heritage of Mali



Pupils visit the site after their vacation courses in 2021



Conclusion

- Le site du Tombeau des Askia est depuis 2012 sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial en péril,
- La situation d'insécurité, les difficultés de mobilisation de fonds, défavorisent considérables le processus de retrait du site du Tombeau des Askia sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial en péril.
- Le retrait du site du Tombeau des Askia sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial en péril reste un défi majeur pour l'Etat du Mali.

Thank you

