

# CYPRUS

## Paphos

### Brief description

Paphos has been inhabited since the Neolithic period. It was a centre of the cult of Aphrodite and of pre-Hellenic fertility deities. Aphrodite's legendary birthplace was on this island, where her temple was erected by the Myceneans in the 12th century B.C. The remains of villas, palaces, theatres, fortresses and tombs mean that the site is of exceptional architectural and historic value. The mosaics of Nea Paphos are among the most beautiful in the world.

### 1. Introduction

**Year of Inscription**

**1980**

**Agency responsible for site management**

- Ministry of Communications and Works  
(Department of Antiquities)  
Museum Street 1, 1516 Nicosia, Nicosia  
District, Cyprus  
E-mail: [antiquitiesdept@da.mcwc.gov.cy](mailto:antiquitiesdept@da.mcwc.gov.cy)

### 2. Statement of Significance

**Inscription Criteria**

**C (iii), (vi)**

#### Justification provided by the State Party

The area of Paphos, as it has been described above in Sites I and II, is suggested for inclusion in the World Heritage List because of its properties (monuments) which meet the evaluation Criteria (I), (III) and (VI).

The mosaic compositions at Kato Paphos are very rare and can easily be classified among the best examples in the ancient world; they date from the Hellenistic down to the Byzantine times. As a whole they represent a unique artistic achievement, a real masterpiece of the creative genius of an ancient artist (**Criterion (i)**).

The other archaeological remains preserved in both sites are of great antiquity. The temple of Aphrodite at Kouklia (Palaepaphos) was originally erected in the 12th century B.C. and constituted the focal point in one of the earliest Mycenaean settlements on the island. Other archaeological remains, like villas, palaces, baths, theatres, basilicas, fortresses, rock-hewn peristyle tombs etc. are of outstanding archaeological and historical value, as

they are excellent means - real "keys" - for our approach, understanding, knowledge and real appreciation of ancient architecture, way of life and mind in general (**Criterion (iii)**).

Finally, the monuments (properties) at both sites are closely and directly associated with the legend and cult of Aphrodite (Venus) in Cyprus where the Goddess was born and had her main and world celebrated sanctuary. Focused on the western shores of Cyprus, the cult of Aphrodite spread all over the entire ancient world. Under the inspired influence of the Homeric poetry this pre-hellenic goddess of fertility became the ideal of beauty, inspiring writers, poets and artists throughout human history, exercising an influence of cardinal importance on the evolution of World ideals on human beauty and corporal harmony (**Criterion (vi)**).

Therefore, Paphos, adorned with properties (monuments) of outstanding and universal value and blessed with the universal religious and cultural importance of the cult of Aphrodite, has since antiquity been established as an undisputable place of major importance and of outstanding value for the artistic and religious evolution of mankind.

#### As provided in ICOMOS evaluation

Because of their great antiquity, and because they are closely and directly related to the cult and legend of Aphrodite (Venus), who under the influence of the Homeric poetry became the ideal of beauty and love, inspiring writers, poets and artists throughout human history, the nominated properties can indeed be considered to be of outstanding universal value. The nominated properties meet the evaluation criteria (iii) and (vi).

Criterion (iii): Pre-hellenic fertility deities were worshipped in Cyprus since Neolithic times (6th millennium B.C.); many of the archaeological remains are of great antiquity; the temple of Aphrodite dates back to the 12th century B.C. and represents one of the earliest Mycenaean settlements; the mosaics of Nea Paphos are extremely rare and rank among the best examples in the whole world; these mosaics range from Hellenistic down to Byzantine times. The architectural remains of villas, palaces, theatres, fortress, rock hewn peristyle tombs are of outstanding historical value as they are one of the keys of our understanding of ancient architecture.

Criterion (vi): The universal religious and cultural importance of the Cult of Venus, local fertility deity of Old Paphos which developed into the world goddess of love and beauty, is an indubitable fact

that contributes to the outstanding value of these properties.

#### **Committee Decision**

1979: The Committee deferred this nomination until more precise information was available on the possible adverse impact on the sites of the pressing needs of tourism development.

1980 Bureau: The Bureau felt that too much emphasis has been placed in the nomination on the intangible aspects of the sites and wished to know under which criterion the property was nominated. It furthermore requested ICOMOS to make a comparative study of similar sites in the Mediterranean area.

1980 Committee: The Committee made no statement.

- Statement of significance adequately defines the outstanding universal value of the site
- No change required

#### **Boundaries and Buffer Zone**

- Status of boundaries of the site: adequate
- No buffer zone needed
- Other measures to protect the site are: the Antiquities Law provides for the establishment of so-called "Controlled areas" around the site

#### **Status of Authenticity/Integrity**

- World Heritage site values have been maintained
- No significant changes to the authenticity/integrity of the site

### **3. Protection**

#### **Legislative and Administrative Arrangements**

- No special legislation or administrative arrangements
- Significant changes include that many land plots changed from private ownership to State property
- The protection arrangements are considered highly effective

#### **Actions taken/proposed**

- Dept of Antiquities expropriates specific lands plots adjacent to the site
- timeframe: continuous

### **4. Management**

#### **Use of site/property**

- Visitor attraction

- Other: scientific research, cultural events

#### **Management /Administrative Body**

- No steering group. The management of the site is under the direct supervision of the Curator of Ancient Monuments and the Director of the Department of Antiquities
- Coordinator responsibilities have been added to an existing job
- Levels of public authority who are primarily involved with the management of the site: national
- The current management system is sufficiently effective but improvements are needed
- Actions taken: an archaeological officer responsible for Paphos has been appointed since 1999

### **5. Management Plan**

- No management plan

### **6. Financial Resources**

#### **Financial situation**

- State Budget Annual
- Sufficient

### **7. Staffing Levels**

- Number of staff: 19

Rate of access to adequate professional staff across the following disciplines:

- Good: conservation, management, promotion, interpretation, visitor management
- Average: education
- Access to foreign archaeological missions for the excavation and study of the site

### **8. Sources of Expertise and Training in Conservation and Management Techniques**

- Conservation facilities are available at the Paphos District Museum. In the case of site II (Palaepaphos) conservation museum facilities are available within the protected area
- Training needs not currently being met: training of local people and training of students

### **9. Visitor Management**

- Visitor statistics: 626923 visitors in 2004. (number of tickets sold and record of free entrances)

- Number of visitors not changed substantially for the last three years
- Visitor facilities: parking, a visitors' centre, site museum (site II) sanitary facilities, pedestrian walkways, resting shelters, panels with explanatory texts, guidebooks, observation points and protective roofing for mosaics
- Facilities are adequate

### 10. Scientific Studies

- An agreed research strategy for the site
- Risk assessment, theft and alarm systems; monitoring exercises including humidity recording of the mosaics; condition surveys, mosaic conservation studies in collaboration with Getty Conservation Institute, archaeological surveys
- Monographs and guidebooks

### 11. Education, Information and Awareness Building

- There are many signs referring to World Heritage site
- World Heritage Convention Emblem used on some publications
- Adequate awareness of World Heritage among: visitors, local communities, businesses, local authorities
- Need for training of local authorities and communities concerning the building development
- There are no specific educational programmes for both sites of Paphos. However, they are included in the educational visits of the primary and secondary schools
- Special events include the participation of Cyprus in an exhibition concerning the sites inscribed on the WHL of UNESCO, held in Athens in September 2002. Cypriot WH sites were promoted by the Cyprus Tourism Organisation at the Exhibition of Cultural Tourism held in Berlin, 7-11 March 2003
- International training courses from 1988 until 1993 organised by the Department of Antiquities, the Getty Conservation Institute and the University of Cyprus (only the last). Palaepaphos (Kouklia) has been included in the first cultural tourism themed project entitled "Aphrodite Cultural Route", promoted by the Cyprus Tourism Organisation
- Local participation: Both sites are used by local authorities and private societies for cultural and social events

### 12. Factors affecting the Property (State of Conservation)

#### Reactive monitoring reports

- World Heritage Committee sessions: 28th (2004)

#### Conservation interventions

- Repairs and restoration work
- Archaeological excavations, mosaic floor conservation projects with international expertise and the Getty Conservation Institute
- Preventive measures as the fencing of the areas, expropriation of land plots
- Building restoration and use for cultural events and exhibitions
- Present state of conservation: good

#### Threats and Risks to site

- Development pressure, visitor/tourism pressure
- Measures taken by the Dept of Antiquities include following up of the problems in collaboration with other concerned departments, further expropriation of land plots and expansion of lands to be declared ancient monuments

### 13. Monitoring

- Formal monitoring programme
- Measures taken/planned: the Department of Antiquities carries out a regular follow up of the condition of the mosaics of Kato Paphos as well as of the walls around them. The mosaics of the House of Orpheus are under the continuous supervision of the Getty Conservation Institute. An assessment of the Orpheus mosaic and its hexashelter, carried out in 2004, included cleaning, photography, condition recording, mapping, surface temperature and colour measurements and sampling. At the same time, the GCI inspected the mosaic of the House of Dionysus. The condition report will serve as baseline documentation for future monitoring and assessment

### 14. Conclusions and Recommended Actions

- Main benefits of WH status are conservation, social, economic and management
- Achievements since the inscription are control of the building activities and the development of surrounding areas, increased number of visits by the public, allocation of funds for regular conservation

- Weaknesses of management include increase of responsibilities of already-existing staff involved in the management at all ancient monuments of all over the country

**Future actions:**

- Increasing of staff