

Volubilis (Morocco)

No 836

1. BASIC DATA

State Party: Morocco

Name of property: Archaeological site of Volubilis

Location: Wilaya de Meknès - Province Meknès
El Menzeh Meulay-Idriss Zerhoun

Inscription: 1997

Brief Description:

The Mauritanian capital, founded in the 3rd century B.C., became an important outpost of the Roman Empire and was graced with many fine buildings. Extensive remains of these survive in the archaeological site, located in a fertile agricultural area. Volubilis was later briefly to become the capital of Idris I, founder of the Idrisid dynasty, who is buried at nearby Moulay Idriss.

2. ISSUES RAISED

Background

At its 30th session, (Decision 30 COM 7B.55) the Committee urged the State Party, *'as requested in Decision 29 COM 7B.100, paragraph 5, to define a buffer zone to ensure the protection of the archaeological site limits, taking into consideration the surrounding landscape in its entirety, in particular the agricultural plain to the west of the property, which is inseparable from its historical origins'*.

At its 31st session (Christchurch 31 COM 8B.57) the Committee considered a proposal for a buffer zone and referred back the proposed buffer zone for the Archaeological Site of Volubilis (Morocco) to the State Party to allow it to provide more details on the area of the zone and the protective policies in place.

Modification

The State Party has submitted proposals for a buffer zone of approximately 50 sq m around the property and enclosing the neighbouring town of Moulay Idriss. The proposed area contains around 250 ancient and Islamic archaeological sites and protects the plain to the west and the mountain to the east of Volubilis both of which are seen as having indissoluble bonds with the property.

The zone of protection was designated under a Law of 1920 which prohibits construction or modification to the aspect of the places included in this zone without the authorization of the Service of Antiquities, Beaux-Arts and Historic buildings. A contour map of 1:50,000 for the buffer zone has been provided.

Recommendation

The information that was lacking in 2007 has now been provided. ICOMOS considers that the proposed buffer zone offers protection to the immediate setting of Volubilis. Considering the open nature of the landscape surrounding the site and the long views, the wider setting will also need protection from planning mechanisms.

3. ICOMOS RECOMMENDATIONS

ICOMOS recommends that the proposed buffer zone of the archaeological site of Volubilis (Morocco) be ***approved***.

