

CROATIA

Episcopal Complex of the Euphrasian Basilica in the Historic Centre of Poreč

Brief Description

The group of religious monuments in Poreč, where Christianity was established as early as the 4th century, constitutes the most complete surviving complex of its type. The basilica, atrium, baptistery and Episcopal palace are outstanding examples of religious architecture, while the basilica itself combines classical and Byzantine elements in an exceptional manner.

1. Introduction

Year(s) of Inscription

1997

Agencies responsible for site management

- The Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia - The Administration for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, Runjaninova 2, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia
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2. Statement of Significance

Inscription Criteria

C (i), (iii), (iv)

Justification provided by the State Party

The complex of the Euphrasian Basilica in Poreč is the most integrally preserved early Christian cathedral complex, the only one containing all the basic parts that used to make up an early Christian cathedral: church, memorial chapel, atrium, baptistery, and Bishop's Palace, unique in the world by its preservation level.

a) (iii) Indications as to the authenticity of the property

The existing expert references are all unanimous in expressing the attitude that the Cathedral complex in Poreč is the best preserved early Christian complex in the world. The Bishop's Palace itself represents a unique example of preservation.

Scientists who were writing about Euphrasiana frequently pointed out that it is the best preserved early Christian Cathedral complex in the world. Nowhere else were all the parts that used to make

up the original early Christian Cathedral so integrally preserved: church, memorial chapel, atrium, baptistery, and particularly the Bishops residence, unique in the world by its preservation level. All these buildings have almost entirely preserved their original structures, from top to bottom. This is the result of only minimal transformations undergone by the complex in the 1,400 years of its existence, since the comprehensive Euphrasian reconstruction. The fundamental structural walls were preserved the most, but the same is true also of the decorations: architectural sculptures (a series of pillars with capitals), stone church furniture, and mosaics (on the walls, as well as the pavement ones). Comprehensive 6th century stucco work represents a particular rarity, whereas the encrustation (opus sectile) in the main apse represents the most integral composition made in this technique preserved from the early Christian period. All this abundance of original, and, through subsequent interventions only minimally altered structural components, has a considerable value in the scientific study of building techniques and visual arts disciplines. In this respect, Euphrasiana appears as a real treasury of data for studying late antique civilisation in general.

As provided in ICOMOS evaluation

That this property be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of **criteria (ii), (iii), and (iv)**:

The Episcopal complex of the Euphrasian Basilica in the historic centre of Poreč is an outstanding example of an early Christian Episcopal ensemble that is exceptional by virtue of its completeness and its unique basilica cathedral.

Committee Decision

(1997): The Committee decided to inscribe this property on the basis of criteria (ii), (iii) and (iv), considering that the Episcopal complex of the Euphrasian Basilica in the historic centre of Poreč is an outstanding example of an early Christian Episcopal ensemble that is exceptional by virtue of its completeness and its unique Basilica cathedral.

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

Boundaries and Buffer Zone

- Status of boundaries of the site: adequate
- Buffer zone: adequate

- The site makes up 10% of a larger protected area that acts as a buffer zone

Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- World Heritage site values have been maintained

3. Protection

Legislative and Administrative Arrangements

- “Within the general policies of local authorities”
- The protection arrangements are considered sufficiently effective

4. Management

Use of site/property

- Religious use, visitor attraction

Management /Administrative Body

- Steering group formally constituted
- Site manager is not full time. The monument is under the constant supervision of the Administration for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of the Ministry of Culture within the framework of conservation and restoration work that is being carried out
- Levels of public authority who are primarily involved with the management of the site: national; local
- The current management system is sufficiently effective

5. Management Plan

- Management plan is being implemented
- Implementation commenced: January 2000
- Adequate
- Responsibility for over-seeing the implementation of the management plan and monitoring its effectiveness: Art Conservation Department of Pula, Art Conservation Bureau in Poreč, Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia

6. Financial Resources

Financial situation

- National budgetary funds
- Funding is sufficient

7. Staffing Levels

- Number of staff: not given
- Adequate number of staff

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

- Very good: conservation
- Good: management, promotion
- Average: interpretation, education, visitor management

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

- Not available

9. Visitor Management

- 2004 visits: 382,136; overnight stays: 2,390,352
- Trend: growth
- Visitor facilities: tours, publications available for sale
- Visitor needs: better quality publications and information material

10. Scientific Studies

- Scientific studies: monitoring exercises, condition surveys, archaeological surveys

11. Education, Information and Awareness Building

- Adequate awareness of World Heritage through signage
- World Heritage Convention Emblem is visible
- Adequate awareness of World Heritage among: visitors, local communities, businesses, local authorities
- An educational programme in schools, including an obligatory site visit and curricula material
- Exhibitions of WH sites held in rotation throughout the country
- Website material is available, but not specific to the site (www.istra.com/porec, www.porec.hr)

12. Factors affecting the Property (State of Conservation)

Reactive monitoring reports

- N/A

Conservation interventions

- Extensive restoration on the Episcopal Palace; a museum has been created within the building; archaeological research in the archaeological zone has been completed
- Overall state of conservation: adequate

Threats and Risks to site

- Environmental: natural disasters
- Development pressures, visitor and tourism pressure

13. Monitoring

- No formal monitoring programme

14. Conclusions and Recommended Actions

- Main benefits of WH status: conservation
- Strengths: renovation of the Episcopal Palace, opening of the Museum area of the site