

The Stari Grad Plain (Croatia)

No 1240

Official name as proposed by the State Party: The Stari Grad Plain

Location: Split and Dalmatia County

Brief description:

Part of the Adriatic island of Hvar was colonised for agricultural purposes by Ionian Greeks from Paros in the 4th century BCE. The colonists made use of the fertile plain near their port town, today known as Stari Grad. They set up a regular series of parcels and paths, whose boundaries were marked by dry stone walls. This system of agricultural land organisation in regular-sized parcels, termed *chora*, has remained practically intact down to the present day, despite the many changes that have occurred in the course of the island's history. The main crops are today still grapes and olives.

Category of property:

In terms of the categories of cultural property set out in Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a *site*. In the terms of the *Operational guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (2 February 2005), paragraph 47, it is also a *cultural landscape*.

1. IDENTIFICATION

Included in the Tentative List: 1st February 2006

International Assistance from the World Heritage Fund for preparing the Nomination: None

Date received by the World Heritage Centre: 7 February 2006

Background: This is a new nomination.

Consultations: ICOMOS has consulted its International Scientific Committees on Historic Gardens - Cultural Landscapes and on Archaeological Heritage Management.

Literature consulted (selection):

Beaumont, R. J., "Greek influence in the Adriatic Sea". *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 54, 1936, p. 159–204.

Wilkes, J. J., *Dalmatia*, London, 1969.

Slapsak, B., and Kirigin, B., "Pharos and its chora", *Atti del quarantesimo convegno di studi sulla Magna Grecia*, Taranto, 2001, p. 567–91.

Carter, J. C., *Crimean Chersonesos. City, Chora, Museum and Environs*, 2003, Austin, TX.

Kirigin, B., Pharos, *The Parian Settlement in Dalmatia. A study of a Greek Colony in the Adriatic*, Oxford, 2006.

Technical Evaluation Mission: 13 - 17 September 2007

Additional information requested and received from the State Party: ICOMOS sent a letter to the State Party on 17 December 2007, requesting it to:

- Supply information about the exact boundary of the ancient Greek settlement that is currently visible and recognised by archaeologists, and to reconsider on this basis the boundaries of the nominated property.

- Confirm the commitment of the State Party to guarantee a sufficient and appropriate level of autonomy and financing for the management organisation, AGER d.o.o.

- Draw up detailed plans concerning specific aspects of conservation and risk management, particularly with regard to presentation and risk management with respect to tourism development.

- Supply schedules for the approval and implementation of the management plan and the special renovation plan.

- Supply information about the archaeological excavation programmes planned for the property.

The State Party sent additional documentation on 27 February 2008 that partially meets these requests.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report: 11 March 2008

2. THE PROPERTY

Description

The nominated property is a large fertile plain about six kilometres long and two kilometres wide. It is situated in the north-east of the Adriatic island of Hvar, between the towns of Stari Grad to the east and Jelsa and Vrboska to the west, and between a row of hills near the Adriatic, to the north, and St. Nicholas Mountain to the south (628 m).

The nominated property has a surface area of 3,329 hectares. It is surrounded by a buffer zone of 4,451 hectares.

Stari Grad Plain

The remarkable fertility of Stari Grad Plain is the result of the deposition of loess during the last Ice Age (Würm).

In the early 4th century BCE, Greeks from the Aegean island of Paros colonised the plain. They divided it into regular rectangular parcels of slightly over 16 hectares (181 m x 905 m), subdivided into square lots (181 m x 181 m). The boundaries were marked by dry stone walls forming a set of original walled lots suitable for Greek agriculture. This cadastral system is called *chora*. It is very adequately conserved today (See 3 -Integrity), and its initial coherence is clearly shown by aerial photography.

The physical boundaries of parcels and paths were marked by dry stone walls, which have subsequently been regularly maintained and repaired. Some are simply small walls marking the boundaries of parcels, but others are much larger, and have been made more substantial by the accumulation of stones taken out of the ground and added. They have thus played the complementary role of paths for moving from one place to another, and surveillance of the plain, because of their height.

The nominated property also contains small huts entirely of dry stone construction (*trims*), in which tools were kept and where it was possible to seek shelter during bad weather. The relative dryness of the Mediterranean climate led to the construction of a set of cisterns of varying sizes for the retention of rainwater for agricultural purposes, and these are to be found at different points of the plain.

Today, a modern road runs the entire length of the northern part of the plain. In the centre of the plain is a small earth strip created in 1950 for crop spraying and fire fighting planes.

Residential network in the environs of Stari Grad Plain

Five villages are situated on the surrounding hills, to the south of the nominated property, right on the limit of the fertile land of the plain: Dol, Vrbanj, Svirce, Vrisnik, and Pitve. It may well be that they have been associated to the cadastral system of the *chora* since the very origins of the Greek colonisation. A very dense and well conserved network of small paths and tracks links them to the plain, demonstrating the functional link between the rural housing of the villages and the exploitation of the plain. However there is no explicit evidence that the villages are of Greek origin: the oldest texts mentioning them date from the 13th century (Pitve), and more generally the 14th century (Hvar, Vrbanj, Vrisnik).

Some of these villages were relatively large at one time in population terms, but subsequently lost population, gradually reaching the very low levels seen today. They have a rural built heritage dating back at the earliest to the late Middle Ages, and at the latest to the 19th century. During all periods, the rural housing has not encroached on the productive agricultural zone.

The villages today form a notable element of the cultural landscape in the immediate environs of the *chora*, which visually marks the southern limit of the area. They form part of a sort of urban belt around the plain with the towns of Stari Grad, Vrboska and Jelsa.

The contemporary town of Stari Grad is built on the site of the ancient Greek town of *Pharos*, founded in 385 BCE by the first colonists, at the head of a deep bay. It quickly became one of the most important Greek colonies of the Adriatic because of its flourishing agricultural production.

The town of today has two main parts: the historic centre to the south, built between the 16th century and the 19th century, and the *Malo Selo* quarter to the north. The latter is a peasant settlement created in the mid-17th century by refugees fleeing the Turkish invasions on the mainland. Only the historic centre, to the south, is within the

boundaries of the nominated property. Today it is a small town whose main wealth is still based on agricultural produce, and on tourism.

Part of Vrboska is located in the core zone. Vrboska is apparently not a Greek town, and the first mention of the place dates back to the 14th century. Today it forms part of the municipality of Jelsa. The town of Jelsa is outside the nominated zone.

The edge of the plain has traces of several forts, some of which are attributable to the Greeks, and others to the Illyrians who preceded them.

History and development

There is evidence of a small Iron Age Illyrian tribal community in the 6th-5th centuries BCE, at Stari Grad, on the site of what is today the Church of St. John, in archaeological vestiges directly below the Greek level.

Remains of forts and stone tumuli around the plain date from this period, or possibly from slightly earlier.

Greek expansion into the Adriatic began with the Syracusan tyrant Dionysius the Elder. The first colony was founded by the military conquest of the island of Vis, at the expense of the Illyrians, in 394 BCE.

The next stage of Greek expansion was the conquest of the island of Hvar by the inhabitants of the Aegean island of Paros, allies of Dionysius, ten years later. They created the colony of *Pharos*.

The perimeter of the town was circled by defensive walls, vestiges of which are visible next to the Church of St. John, and the remains of a city gate with towers can be seen nearby. Excavations have provided evidence of the ground plan of the Greek town and have uncovered vestiges of houses.

Agricultural colonisation was undertaken alongside the construction of the fortified town. It was based on subdivision into regular rectangular parcels (*chora*). The plain consists of 75 main parcels of around 16 hectares, subdivided in turn into square lots. Stone boundary markers were built between the various parcels and lots (See Description). Some excavation evidence from near Stari Grad suggests that part of the population lived on the plain itself.

The defensive system of the plain reused the former Illyrian forts and added new forts. Traces of four of them have been located.

The collapse of the Syracusan Empire in the mid-4th century BCE resulted in *Pharos* becoming an independent principality of Hellenised Illyrians. Its prosperity led to it becoming the capital of Demetrius of Hvar, who extended his power over the region in around 220 BCE.

Demetrius came into conflict with Rome, and the town was partially destroyed in 219 BCE. The town was however soon rebuilt with the assistance of the former

metropolis of *Paros*, as shown by two Greek inscriptions discovered from this period.

The island was unable to resist Roman conquest for long, and the port became, in the mid-2nd century BCE, an important naval base for Roman expeditions against the Dalmatians and Illyrians on the mainland. The town was given the name of *Pharia*, and acquired the status of a *municipium* during the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius. The whole island was colonised by the Romans at this time.

Archaeological traces have demonstrated that economic activities centred on grapes, fishing and port commerce. Some Roman graves were dug in the plain, and additional cisterns were built.

There is little testimony concerning the period of late Antiquity. *Pharia* was fortified again, with a smaller perimeter compared with the Greek period. The first traces of Christianity are from the 5th and 6th centuries, with the presence of tombs, a baptistery and mosaics.

The medieval history of the island of Hvar and of *Pharia/Faria* is complex. It became the seat of a Christian bishop (12th century), and was then conquered by the Venetians (mid-13th century), who maintained almost permanent political control of the island until 1797.

Over this long period, the plain was under the shared or alternative control of the Christian church and the medieval aristocracy who drew substantial profits from it. Small chapels were built on the plain. The earliest descriptions of the plain and its agricultural system date back to the 14th and 15th centuries. The walls built on the boundaries of the Greek parcels are clearly named and identified.

The town underwent a period of renewal from the 15th century onwards, as a trading centre and port, in the orbit of the development of Venetian economic power. Its name at this time was *Campo San Stephani*.

In the 19th century, irrigation work was undertaken on the plain, and a cadastral scheme was drawn up by the Austrian administration.

At the end of the 19th century, winegrowing was seriously affected by the disease of phylloxera. This led to an abandonment of the agricultural land and an initial wave of rural emigration at the start of the 20th century. The winegrowing villages of the south were partially abandoned. The cadastral structure of the land and paths was conserved, but it was weakened by lack of maintenance.

A new form of threat to the conservation of the *chora* developed after the Second World War, when collective farms and the mechanisation of ploughing were introduced. This coincided with a second wave of emigration.

The third period, at the end of the 20th century, was marked by a move back to grapes and olives, but using modern, mechanised equipment that also pose a threat to conservation (See 4 - Factors affecting the property).

Stari Grad Plain values

Stari Grad Plain constitutes a complete land use and agricultural colonisation system developed by the Greeks in the 4th century BCE. Its cadastral system, consisting of geometric parcels with boundaries marked by dry stone walls (*chora*) is exemplary. It embodies the occupation and development of a vast and fertile coastal plain. The cadastral system set up by the Greek colonists has been respected in subsequent periods. Agricultural activity in the *chora* has been continuous up to the present day, and is based mainly on grapes and olives.

The ensemble today constitutes a cultural landscape of a fertile cultivated plain that follows the cadastral organisation of Greek colonisation. From the outset, a rainwater recovery system using cisterns and small gutters was a complementary component of the cadastral system.

The agricultural plain is coupled with the port town of Pharos/Stari Grad, whose visible ancient traces are however few in number. On the edge of the plain, vestiges of Illyrian and Greek forts indicate the presence of a system to defend the agricultural plain.

A set of peasant villages are located on the exact limit of the fertile land, and are linked by a dense network of small paths and tracks to the plain. However, no agricultural evidence has been found to suggest that the villages are of Greek origin.

3. OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE, INTEGRITY AND AUTHENTICITY

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

The Greek cadastral system has been fully respected during the continuous agricultural use of the plain, based on the same crops. Today it is perfectly identifiable. It has been affected by the construction of a road on its northern edge and a path. The latter is a rectilinear earth track at the heart of the plain, but it is precisely aligned with the geometrical network structure of the *chora* and thus respects that structure.

The plain today forms an integral agricultural and cadastral ensemble.

Stari Grad Plain constitutes a living cultural system that has demonstrated great continuity over a long historical period. Fostered by the fertility and great extent of the plain, the crops have been perpetuated, consisting mainly of grapes and olives. It is also a natural reserve.

The cadastral system of the plain forms a living cultural landscape of great integrity.

The landscape in the environs of the plain also embodies the visual unity and continuity of Mediterranean landscapes. To the south the villages mark the exact limit of the fertile plain. They are the very direct result of the use of the old Greek *chora* by later periods, probably from the Middle Ages onwards.

The archaeological urban elements currently visible in the town of Stari Grad, and more generally the archaeological elements linked to the houses of the Greek period are relatively limited in number and significance.

Authenticity

The authenticity of the Greek cadastral system of *chora* is clearly demonstrated over the whole plain, both by observation on the ground and by the various methods of aerial observation.

The stone built structures of the walls are authentic, and since the founding Greek period the same basic materials have been used and reused in the dry stacking of stones. The stone walls have been systematically maintained and rebuilt over the course of history, until a relatively recent period when they have sometimes been threatened (See 4). It is however more difficult to establish whether the *trims*, small shelters used for agricultural purposes, are of Greek origin. But they certainly employ a dry stone construction method that is quite widely found in the Mediterranean world.

A certain number of vestiges of the defensive system of the plain, built in antiquity, can be observed. There are also some ancient cisterns. These architectural and archaeological elements contribute to the authenticity of the site.

While the location of the villages fully respects the agricultural activity in the *chora*, the historical study (See 2) shows that their built elements cannot today be described as authentic, as they date back at most to the Medieval period and more certainly to the modern and contemporary periods.

ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity have been met by the cultural landscape of the *chora* in Stari Grad Plain. They are however not been satisfactorily established in the case of its urban and village environment.

Comparative analysis

The system of land subdivision marked by dry stone wall boundaries is known to exist in other Greek towns.

At *Metapontum*, the land division of the *chora* extends up to the immediate vicinity of the town, on long strips about 6 km in length, between two rivers. The primitive land organisation dates back to the 5th and 6th centuries BCE. The *chora* was increased in size and partially modified with the extension of the town in the 4th century BCE. The basic parcels are almost square (210 m x 220 m). The excavations have revealed a large number of farms from different periods of Greek Antiquity: Achaeon, Classical, Hellenistic.

At *Chersonesus*, the primitive *chora* extended in an arc around the town. The reconstruction of the town in around 350 BCE however led to the establishment of a new *chora*, this time based on the paths leading to the town and a right-angled grid system. The square parcels with sides of one *stadium* (210 m) are the rule, giving an area of 4.4 hectares. As at Pharos, the main boundaries

are marked by large stone walls, and each square parcel is subdivided into gardens surrounded by smaller walls. The main crops were grapes (50%), orchard fruit and kitchen garden crops. The agricultural system of *Chersonesus* was moreover extended on very many occasions to widen the agricultural territory, with a regular grid system, with an area covering the whole region.

The agricultural sites of *Metapontum* and *Chersonesus* did not however continue to be exploited on the basis of the initial Greek land division system of the *chora*. The site of *Metapontum* was transformed into an open agricultural space as early as the 3rd century BCE by the Greeks themselves. The very vast ensemble of *Chersonesus* was wholly modified and reused. Today these are limited and disparate archaeological sites, unlike the Stari Grad Plain, which has indeed retained an overall land division system, dry stone wall boundaries and a farming system that is in continuity with those of its origins. However, a portion of the very vast ensemble of *Chersonesus* has remained in conformity with an ancient land division system, at *Kalos Limen*. The rectangular lots (210 m x 420 m) are enclosed by stone walls 1 metre high.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative study provides satisfactory elements of comparison with the two other similar Greek agricultural archaeological sites. It clearly shows the living cultural landscape aspect of the Stari Grad Plain, its good preservation and its uniqueness.

However, a widening of the comparisons to include the other agricultural land division systems of Antiquity, and the various dry stone architectures of the Mediterranean basin, and to other civilisations, would have better established the comparative value and significance of Stari Grad Plain.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the inscription on the World Heritage List.

Justification of the Outstanding Universal Value

The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- The original Greek regular geometrical land division system or *chora* has remained practically intact over 24 centuries of history. This constitutes an exceptional testimony.
- Regularly maintained dry stone walls mark the boundaries of the *chora*, in accordance with the initial foundation. The ensemble constitutes a unique cultural landscape of great authenticity. This constitutes an exceptional testimony.
- The original agricultural activity, based on grapes and olives, has been maintained from the origins up to the present day. It uses the original cistern-based agricultural irrigation system. This constitutes an exceptional testimony.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed

The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (i), (ii), (iii) and (v).

Criterion (i): represent a masterpiece of human creative genius.

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the agricultural land division of Stari Grad Plain is complete and that it is the best preserved example of its type in the Mediterranean world.

It is a masterpiece of agricultural design and geodesic knowledge, illustrating the creative genius of the world of ancient Greece. It is clearly recognisable as a cultural landscape, in particular by the boundary walls made of dry stone.

ICOMOS considers that the land division system of Stari Grad Plain with its boundary walls is indeed more complete and has greater integrity than the other sites bearing similar testimony. It was, however, the place in which the system was developed, even though it constitutes a fine example of the system's application as a result of the Greek colonisation of the island of Hvar.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has not been justified.

Criterion (ii): exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design.

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the initial land division of Stari Grad Plain has remained the basic model for its agricultural activities over the subsequent centuries, up to the present day.

More generally, the regular geometric system of land division developed by the ancient Greeks strongly influenced the Roman world and subsequent periods.

ICOMOS agrees with the argument concerning the influence and diffusion of the Greek geometrical model for the division of agricultural land in later neighbouring civilisations.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified.

Criterion (iii): bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared.

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the agricultural plain of Stari Grad has remained continually in use, for the same initial agricultural produce, for 2,400 years.

ICOMOS acknowledges the significance from a landscape viewpoint of a cultural tradition spanning a long period of history that is embodied by Stari Grad Plain.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified.

Criterion (v): be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change.

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that Stari Grad Plain and its environment of rural villages are a very ancient example of human settlement, which is today threatened by modern economic development, particularly by rural depopulation and the abandonment of traditional agriculture.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion is justified, in view of the economic, social and political threats facing the property.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (ii), (iii) and (v) and that Outstanding Universal Value has been demonstrated.

4. FACTORS AFFECTING THE PROPERTY

Abandonment of traditional agricultural practices, informing the population

Only 40% of the land of Stari Grad Plain is currently farmed. The ancient land division system, its network of boundary walls, the width of the paths, and the hydraulic equipment are conducive to the traditional agricultural use of the plain.

Pressure for agricultural renewal through technical modernisation and mechanisation raises several threats. A longstanding tendency towards the abandonment of farming land is visible in the walled parcels, strengthened by the fear of being unable to change the historic cadastral system in the future. On the other hand, there is also a trend emerging to get rid of the parcels rapidly, aimed at removing the boundary walls to provide vaster and more open spaces. These threats are extended to the traditional paths, with an abandonment of maintenance and pressure to enlarge the paths by removing the low walls.

More generally, part of the local population tends to consider preservation efforts as a hindrance to the development of the island and the modernisation of its agriculture. They are not sufficiently well informed to appreciate the heritage value of the property.

ICOMOS recognises the major importance of the threats currently facing the property because of the desire of the rural population to modernise farming practices. There is a risk that these threats will compromise the property's landscape significance and its integrity if they are not sufficiently taken into account and included in the management process in a positive way. Determined efforts must be made to inform the inhabitants in order to encourage an understanding of the significance, values and challenges represented by the nominated property. The management plan should encourage collective reflection about agricultural renewal that respects the

historic land division system, while contributing to economic value and appeal for tourism.

Know-how, behaviour

At one time, almost all the farmers on the plain knew how to maintain and repair dry stone walls. Today, only a few older farmers still know the techniques of dry stone wall building. In practical terms, this results in the abandonment of the maintenance of the walls, and even the reuse of the stones as building materials.

ICOMOS shares the concerns of the State Party about the gradual disappearance of know-how and customary practices. In addition to better general information of the population, these questions should be addressed and appropriate actions proposed in the management plan.

Visitors, pressure from tourism

A plan is being considered to develop cultural tourism in Stari Grad Plain: guided visits, cycle paths, events relating to agricultural activities (wine harvest and wine route, olive harvesting).

Furthermore, a tendency towards illegal construction in Stari Grad Plain has developed since the 1960s, particularly because of the sudden expansion in Mediterranean tourism and the resulting need for accommodation capacities and therefore land. These pressures increase the threats facing the property and tend to transform the land, to damage and remove boundary walls, and lead to the re-use of their stones.

ICOMOS shares the State Party's concerns about illegal constructions and the need to control pressure on land resulting from the rapid development of tourism on the island.

Pollution

There is not currently any pollution of the ground, water or air, as there is no industry or industrial-scale farming on the island of Hvar.

Climate and impact of climate change

The island of Hvar has a Mediterranean climate with certain characteristics that are specific to the Adriatic. Winters are generally temperate, and summers are almost always hot and dry. This is the reason for the millennia-old practice of growing crops that are resilient and require little water, such as grapevines, olive trees and some winter cereals.

Up to now, no statistically proven variation in the Hvar microclimate has been recorded by the local meteorological station, which was created in 1858. However, rural depopulation and the abandonment of farmland in the plain are tending to change the plant coverage of the arable land. The land is tending to become covered with brush and conifers. While on the one hand this vegetation protects the soil against erosion and desertification, on the other hand it contributes to damage to the walls and the archaeological contents of the subsurface.

ICOMOS considers that plant coverage now developing place on uncultivated parcels may contribute to damage to buried archaeological vestiges and contribute to forest fire risks.

Risk preparedness

No significant earthquake has been recorded on the island of Hvar. The earthquake risks appear to be low.

There is no major flooding risk in view of the morphology of the island at Stari Grad Plain.

The nominated property and its buffer zone contain a large forested area to the south (slope of the mountain of St. Nicholas), and more recent areas of brush and wooded parcels in the plain itself. Forest fires are an important risk for the site. The spontaneous covering of brush that is tending to gain ground provides material that easily catches fire during the dry summers.

The supervisory authority for the forest of St. Nicholas is Hrvatske Šume (Hvar Forest Management Unit). The forest is managed and equipped in accordance with the usual regional rules: regularly maintained forestry paths and fire stop zones, observation posts, water tanks, equipment depots, alert system.

The usual intervention units are those of the Interior Ministry and the local voluntary fire brigades. The State Party stresses the possibilities of rapid intervention in the event of a fire in Stari Grad plain using the existing system of roads and paths, and the possibility of calling in specialist aerial firefighting units. In the national fire protection plan, intervention on major cultural sites is given priority.

New forestry roads have been announced in the local plans, together with the introduction of regular fire brigade stations in the main towns.

ICOMOS considers that the forest fire risk is considerable. The measures announced should theoretically be capable of dealing with this risk.

ICOMOS considers that the main threats to the property are:

- The changes to the land division system and the illegal constructions associated with agricultural mechanisation and the rapid development of tourism on the island.
- The fragile agricultural situation must be reconsidered with regard to its special relationship to the nominated property, in concertation with the people concerned.
- Fire risk.

5. PROTECTION, CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

Boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone

The nominated property covers an area of 3,329 hectares. Its boundaries correspond to the cultural landscape that is currently protected by the State Party.

Its central part consists of the plain with its ancient land division system, which corresponds to the largest portion

of the property. It extends from the north to the slopes of the coastal hills.

To the west, the property extends over the historic part of the town of Stari Grad, down to the south coast of its bay. The same is true to the east for the ancient part of the town of Vrboska, up to the limits of its estuary.

To the south, the nominated property includes the villages of Dol, Svirce, Vrisnik, Vrbanj and Pitve, to the fertile limits of the plain at the foot of the mountain.

ICOMOS considers that there is very serious doubt about the Greek origin of the villages and about whether they form part of the ancient system of the *chora* (See 3, - Authenticity). The additional documentation throws no new light on this point.

ICOMOS considers that the additional documentation supplied by the State Party highlights the authenticated Greek archaeological zone in the nominated property, but it does not reconsider the geographical boundaries in this light.

ICOMOS considers that it is necessary to reconsider the boundaries of the nominated property on the basis of the definitely established archaeological data, and more generally to establish a carefully considered link between the boundaries of the property, its management and the scientific data.

The buffer zone area is 4,451 hectares, from the Adriatic coast in the west, north and east, to the line of the crest of the mountain of St. Nicholas in the south.

ICOMOS considers it necessary to reconsider the boundaries of the nominated property so that they correspond exactly to the Greek settlement that is today visible and that has been definitely recognised by archaeologists.

Ownership

The agricultural area consists mainly of individual properties governed by private law.

The forested part of the piedmont area of the mountain of St. Nicholas is the property of the Republic of Croatia.

Protection

Legal protection

The nominated property is governed by the Law for the protection and preservation of cultural properties (Official Journal, no. 69/99, no. 151/03 and no. 157/03). It is governed more particularly by Article 10, which inscribes it on the List of Preventively Protected Properties.

The application of the law is the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia, and more specifically its Department of Cultural Heritage Conservation for the Split region.

It is also governed by the new Physical Planning Law (Official Journal, no. 100/04), and the Order on the Development and Protection of Coastal Zones (Official Journal, no. 128/04)

Under the other laws of the Republic and the local land use plans, the property is legally protected as a cultural landscape for the following elements:

- Preservation of archaeological sites.
- Preservation of traditional agricultural uses and of plain landscapes, including strict control of the location of property developments.
- Preservation of villages in accordance with their traditional space organisation.
- Preservation of historic urban spaces of Stari Grad and Vrboska.
- Preservation and maintenance of the hydrographic system of the Mountain St. Nicholas and the plain.
- Preservation and maintenance of the forested area.
- Use of the property for tourism exclusively for cultural, ethnological and ecological purposes.

Buffer zone:

- Hydrographic and forestry preservation is guaranteed.
- Control of property developments and more generally landscape conservation are governed by municipal land use plans.

Traditional protection

Traditional protection, through traditional agricultural practices that respect the ancient agricultural land division and its maintenance in the same form, is tending to become less effective (See 4 - Risks).

Effectiveness of protection measures

ICOMOS considers that the legal protection of the nominated property is adequate.

ICOMOS considers however that its effective implementation would be strongly reinforced through coordination within the framework of an overall management plan for the site and its buffer zone (see Management Plan).

ICOMOS considers that the legal protective measures for the property are adequate. Their application should however be reinforced and coordinated in the framework of the management plan.

Conservation

Inventories, recording, research

The cadastral archives contain information concerning changes of ownership and boundaries.

Archaeological investigations on the island did not begin until 1982 with the programme *Pharos Project, the Archaeology of a Mediterranean Landscape*. The investigations carried out remained relatively limited. They enabled land surveys and the computer processing of these surveys, which today has resulted in a

satisfactory interpretation of Stari Grad Plain and its history. This programme, however, remains unfinished.

Excavations of the Greek town of Pharos have remained partial, limited to a small area of the Greek defensive wall near the Church of St. John, and up to now they do not enable an understanding of the ground plan of the town or its relationship with the traditional agricultural system.

An archaeological collection for the plain is presented at the Municipal Museum of Stari Grad

ICOMOS considers it indispensable that the archaeological land survey of the plain should be completed.

ICOMOS considers it indispensable that a plan should be drawn up for archaeological studies of Pharos, consisting of limited and well targeted excavations together with systematic protective excavations linked to public works at Stari Grad.

ICOMOS considers that it is necessary to draw up an inventory of potential archaeological sites in the nominated property.

Present state of conservation

The present state of conservation of the Greek land division system and the boundary wall system can be described as fragile with regard to present social and economic pressures, and this is linked to a level of knowledge of the ancient environment and a level of awareness of its values amongst the population that are still inadequate.

Active Conservation measures

ICOMOS considers it necessary that a carefully elaborated management plan should be put in place, including a conservation programme, a charter of good practices for the use of the property, and information measures aimed at increasing the population's awareness of the values of the site.

ICOMOS considers that the conservation and regeneration of the cultural landscape depend on the revitalisation of traditional agricultural practices, in the context of a sustainable development approach, and on the ability to maintain and restore the boundary wall system.

ICOMOS considers it necessary to draw up an overall conservation plan for the ancient land management system, and to regenerate those parts that have been abandoned or damaged.

Management

Management structures and processes, including traditional management processes

The representative of the Ministry of Culture in charge of the management of the nominated property is the Conservation Department (located in Split) of the

Administration for the Protection of the Cultural Heritage. It acts in conjunction with the municipal authorities concerned (Stari Grad and Jelsa). Access to the municipal plans requires the consent of the Conservation Department.

Depending on the issue, other ministerial and administrative authorities may be asked to intervene:

- Administration for the Protection of Nature (Ministry of Culture).
- Ministry for the Protection of the Environment, Land Use Plans and Construction.
- Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and Water Management.
- Ministry of the Sea, Tourism, Transport and Development.

A non-profit organisation (AGER d.o.o.) has been set up under the supervision of the Ministry of Culture to coordinate actions for the management of the nominated property. It is governed by the Law of 1999 on the Protection of Cultural Properties. Forty percent of its financial resources are guaranteed by the Ministry. Additional resources come from local authorities and revenues from the site's own activities. The following are present in the structure of the organisation: representatives of the municipal authorities, the Department of Conservation, archaeologists, representatives of economic activities, etc. AGER meets twice a year, or more often if necessary.

ICOMOS considers it important that the new site management organisation body AGER should be effective at a sufficiently high level of decision-making, so as to minimise the risk of compartmentalisation of measures, and the risk that the population may not be able to identify the management authority. To this end, the composition of AGER must be clearly specified, and it must be granted sufficient autonomy and significant human and material resources.

ICOMOS also considers it important that private property owners and farmers are consulted and actively involved in AGER.

Policy framework: management plans and arrangements, including visitor management and presentation

- Land use plans

The legal protection and conservation measures are incorporated in the plans (land use and town planning) of the two municipalities concerned: Stari Grad and Jelsa (Official Journal, Hvar, 03/91, 02/92 and 01/93), and in the regional physical planning programme (Official Journal, Split and Dalmatia region, 01/03 and 05/05).

A series of complementary decisions and revisions of the plans in force (which date back a long time) is in preparation at the Institute of Physical Planning of the Split and Dalmatia region, with a view to establishing a coherent set of rules for the protection of the property as a cultural landscape, in accordance with the new law on physical planning (See - Legal protection), in particular:

- New physical plan for the town of Jelsa (expected at the end of 2007).
- New physical plan for the town of Stari Grad.
- Special renovation and use plan for Stari Grad Plain

- Management plan

A strategic target plan has been drawn up by a consultancy firm in order to provide strategic guidance for the future management of the property, and to prepare for the introduction of the AGER management organisation. The plan has a scope of 5 years.

The additional document supplied by the State Party provides the following details about the content of the management plan, and in particular its different sections:

- The 4-year plan concerning the site's material conservation. It is mainly aimed at restoring the walls of the ancient land division system. Funding is guaranteed by the Ministry of Culture, and the Ministry of the Environment is also involved.
- The natural disaster intervention plan mainly covers fire risk (see 4 - Factors Affecting the Property).
- Tourism management.
- Management of archaeological sites in conjunction with the Municipal Museum of Stari Grad and an archaeological park project at Jardin Remata.

ICOMOS considers that the documents presented as the management plan are, at the current stage of their elaboration, elements prefiguring a management plan based on a set of existing elements and projects, of very disparate levels, and do not constitute a genuinely cogent and approved management plan.

This plan should particularly cover the following:

- The archaeological dimensions of the site: in addition to the traditional *chora*, the archaeological site of Stari Grad and the potential archaeological zones that have not yet been studied. This involves a policy of research carried out in accordance with international standards and the drawing up of measures for the protection and conservation of the archaeological heritage.
- The explicit preservation of the historic and ethnological heritage of the land division parcel system and its dry stone wall boundaries.
- Encouragement for sustainable farming based on the existing traditional land division and agricultural practices.
- Real estate and landscape policies that are extended to the buffer zone. These policies should also be unified between the two municipalities and coordinated in the framework of the site management plan.
- The presentation to the public of the Stari Grad Plain site's values. This presentation is very inadequate concerning the archaeological site of Stari Grad. The references to the property's values by the Museum of Stari Grad are very limited.

Involvement of the local communities

The involvement of local communities currently takes place solely through the municipalities in charge of applying the local land management plans.

ICOMOS considers that the low current level of involvement of the local populations in the process of nominating the property for inscription on the List, and their still insufficient awareness of the values of the property, should be addressed more fully in the management plan.

Resources, including staffing levels, expertise and training

Active staffing on the site at present consists mainly of individual interventions by administration and municipality personnel, carrying out specific missions relating to the property.

AGER plans a permanent minimum structure of one site supervisor assisted by three other people.

AGER should be provided with a body of scientific and administrative advisors capable of training and advising the permanent staff.

ICOMOS considers that the proposed permanent personnel be put in place and completed, particularly from a scientific viewpoint, by the full-time presence of at least one professional archaeologist inside AGER.

ICOMOS considers that the site management and coordination authority, AGER d.o.o., like the management plan, is merely at a prefiguration stage. The personnel and prerogatives of AGER d.o.o. should be stipulated. An overall management plan should be drawn up, approved by the various partners of the site, and implemented.

6. MONITORING

The permanent monitoring indicators announced are:

- State of preservation of dry stone walls (annual).
- Ratio of cultivated and non-cultivated land (annual).
- Preservation of paths (annual).
- Percentage of old buildings restored (annual)
- Population census (every 5 years).

Monitoring will be the responsibility of the site supervisor and the field team. They will draw up an annual report for the institutions and for the AGER advisors.

ICOMOS considers that the monitoring proposals are satisfactory, and that it is necessary to implement them without delay.

7. CONCLUSIONS

ICOMOS considers that Stari Grad Plain is a cultural landscape of outstanding universal value, for it embodies the Greek agricultural land division system of the 4th century BCE, with its dry stone wall boundaries still in place, and its constant reuse of the dry stone up to the present day.

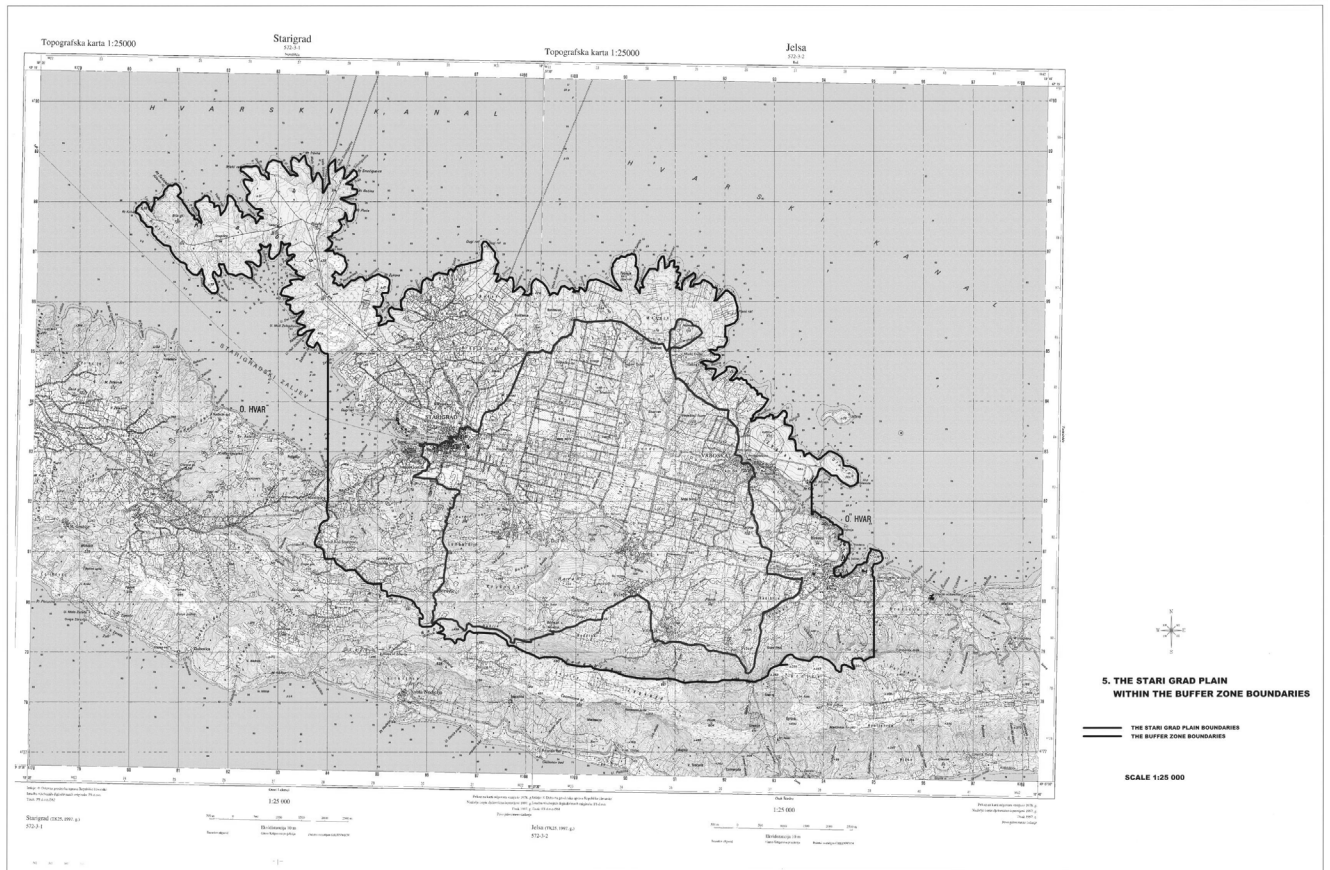
Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the nomination of the Stari Grad Plain, Republic of Croatia, be ***referred back*** to the State party to allow it to:

- Reconsider the boundaries of the nominated property on the basis of the vestiges that are formally recognised by archaeological studies of the ancient Greek settlement, directly linked to the ancient rural land division system (*chora*). This is the case in particular of the villages on the southern edge of the property, as it has not as yet been proven that they formed part of the ancient *chora* system.
- Effectively implement the site management and coordination body (AGER d.o.o.), specify its material means, its human resources, and its brief.
- Draw up a genuinely cogent management plan, have it approved by the various partners of the site, and implement it.

ICOMOS also recommends:

- The implementation of a thorough programme of archaeological excavations for the nominated property, with a view to the expression of its values. The resumption and the expansion of the excavations at the Church of St. John at Stari Grad should thus be seen as a priority, in the hope of better understanding the link between the ancient city and the agricultural system of the *chora*.
- A project aimed at providing a presentation of the site of high quality, and fostering a better understanding of its values by inhabitants and visitors.
- The presence of the plain's inhabitants and farmers on the property management bodies.
- A project for the sustainable revitalisation of the agricultural exploitation of the plain, while respecting its ancient land division system, its dry stone wall system and its agricultural traditions.
- A programme to remove recent built elements that detract from the site's cultural heritage value, wherever this is possible.
- A programme aimed at reducing the impact of tree roots on boundary walls and on buried archaeological vestiges, by the careful removal of the trees and planned management of the non-cultivated areas.



Map showing the boundaries of the nominated property



Aerial view



Stari Grad Plain: Land division on Male Moče



Trim and drystone walls



Vrboska: Church of St. Lawrence