

ICOMOS

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON MONUMENTS AND SITES
CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES MONUMENTS ET DES SITES
CONSEJO INTERNACIONAL DE MONUMENTOS Y SITIOS
МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ СОВЕТ ПО ВОПРОСАМ ПАМЯТНИКОВ И ДОСТОПРИМЕЧАТЕЛЬНЫХ МЕСТ

WORLD HERITAGE LIST

N° 392

A) IDENTIFICATION

Nomination : Temple of Apollo Epicurius, Bassae

Location : Peloponnese

State Party : Greece

Date : December 31, 1985

B) ICOMOS RECOMMENDATION

That the proposed cultural property be included on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria I, II and III.

C) JUSTIFICATION

The first nomination submitted by the Government of Greece to the World Heritage Committee concerns the Temple of Bassae, a universally recognized cultural property.

The Temple of Bassae was dedicated by the inhabitants of Philagia to Apollo Epicurius, the god-healer who had come to their aid when they were beset by an epidemic of the plague. Its ruins rise majestically 1,130 meters high in the mountainous region of Arcadia in the heart of Peloponnese, near Andritsaina.

Built in the second half of the 5th century B.C. (ca. 420-410 B.C. ?), the Temple of Bassae belongs to the first generation of post-Parthenonian edifices. Pausanias admired its beauty and harmony, and, moreover, attributed it to the architect Ictinos, though contemporary archaeologists have been unable to provide confirmation.

The Temple of Bassae offers an appealing blend of the old and the new, the provincial and the refined. With its elongated dimensions (39.87 x 16.13 meters), the peripteral structure is mainly constructed in grey limestone of local origin. The outer colonnade of the hexastyle temple respects an extremely strict Doric order (the metopes are not sculptured). But inside, fine quality sculpturing blends with a more sophisticated architectural style. The front of the pronaos and the opisthodomos, with two in antis columns, restate the Doric order. In the cella, however, a series of imbedded Ionic columns stand against low support walls. On the southern side, where an adyton is located, the last two Ionic columns standing in the cella at the far end of the

oblique walls flank one Corinthian column which stands alone in the centre of the temple.

The decoration is notable, particularly by the different materials used : the walls, and the bases and tambours of the columns are limestone; the Ionic capitals and the Corinthian capital are Doliana marble, as are the sculptured metopes of the exterior frieze of the cella, the plates of the Ionic frieze which runs along the inside of the sanctuary, the guttae, the roof supports and the roofing tiles.

The Temple of Bassae, located away from the city, long remained undiscovered. A French architect came upon it accidentally in 1765 and brought it to the attention of the academic world. The first archaeological investigation in 1812 was profitable but equally prejudicial for the integrity of the site. The discovery of the Ionic frieze's 22 sculptured plates ultimately divested the site of these remarkable sculptures, which were acquired in 1814 by order of the future King George IV of England and transferred to the British Museum along with the Corinthian capital.

Deprived of decorations of exceptional quality (a Centauromachy and a Amazonomachy), the Temple of Bassae was carefully restored in 1902, but in 1965, the critical state of the monument called for renewed renovation. At the present time, the monument is shored up entirely.

ICOMOS recommends that the Temple of Apollo Epicurius at Bassae be included on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria I, II and III.

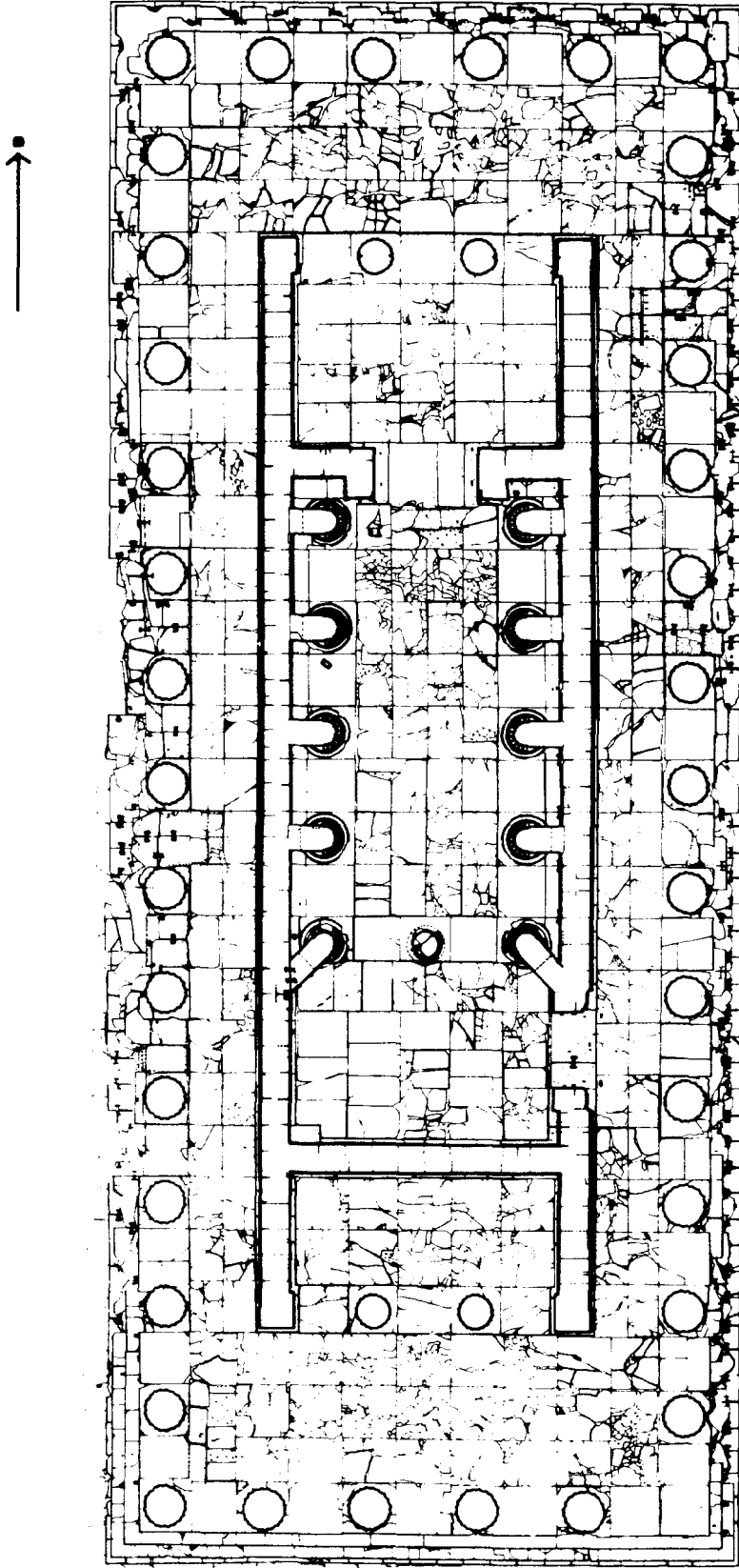
Criterion I. The Temple of Bassae represents a unique artistic achievement, remarkable for its archaic features (elongated surface, an exceptional proportion of 15 columns on the longer side and 6 columns on the facade, and a north-south exposure), and for its daring innovations : use of Ionic and Corinthian orders for a Doric edifice, the variety of materials used, and the originality of the layout of the cella and the adyton.

Criterion II. The capital of the central column of the Temple of Bassae is the most ancient conserved Corinthian capital, and as such the temple may be considered a model for all "Corinthian" monuments of Greek civilisation, Roman civilisation and subsequent civilisations.

Criterion III. Isolated as it is in a conserved environment, the Temple of Bassae is an outstanding example of a Hellenic votive sanctuary located in a rural setting.

ICOMOS recommends that a vast protective area respecting the isolated location of the temple in a mountainous setting be defined, and, further, that no tourist facilities be constructed within view of the monument.

ICOMOS, April 1986.



BASSAE. Plan du temple d'Apollon Epikurios.
(1977)

Temple d'Apollon Epikurrios, vu du nord-ouest (1976).

