GREECE

Temple of Apollo Epicurius at Bassae

Brief description

This famous temple to the god of healing and the sun was built towards the middle of the 5th century B.C. in the lonely heights of the Arcadian mountains. The temple, which has the oldest Corinthian capital yet found, combines the Archaic style and the serenity of the Doric style with some daring architectural features.

1. Introduction

Year of Inscription **1986**

Agency responsible for site management

- Hellenic Ministry of Culture
  7th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities
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2. Statement of Significance

Inscription Criteria **C (i), (ii), (iii)**

Justification provided by the State Party

The temple of Epicurius Apollon is considered to be a monument with universal value for the following reasons:

a) It is one of Ictinus' works as it is referred in Pausanias scripts,

b) Although the temple was built during the last quarter of the 5th century, it has some morphological Archaic-style elements and refinements except the oddities and irregularities.

c) It is one of the best preserved temples of the Antiquity in the world.

d) Due to its long distance from settlements almost all of its building material has been preserved.

e) After the monument's construction in the 5th century no conversion or intervention has taken place on it during the centuries, except the works of restoration in the 20th century.

As provided in ICOMOS evaluation

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.

Committee Decision

Bureau (1986): The Bureau recommended that the Greek authorities extend the perimeter of protection of this property in order to prevent new tourist developments from spoiling the beauty of the surrounding landscape.

Session (1986): The Committee took note of the statement made by the Greek authorities that the area surrounding the temple was controlled by the Ministry of Culture and that no construction of any sort (roads or buildings) was allowed in that area.

- Statement of significance does not adequately define the outstanding universal value of the site. At the time of initial inscription, the World Heritage Committee did not approve a Statement of Significance for the site which defined the outstanding universal value
- Proposal for text has been made by State Party

Boundaries and Buffer Zone

- Buffer zone: adequate; the buffer zone is considered to be sufficient; the monument is located in a unique landscape of unparalleled natural beauty at an altitude of 1,128 meters. The Buffer Zone further includes the ruins of two Archaic Temples at the summit of Mount Kotylion (respectively dedicated to Artemis and Aphrodite) and the Ancient quarries. The greater area does not contain any building that could impede visual contact with the monument, or the archaeological site. The buffer zone was defined by designating the broader area of the Temple of Apollo Epicurius as an archaeological site. Ministry of Culture decision 44671/1836(ΥΠΠΟ/ΑΡΧ/Α1/Φ07/ 44671/1836) Athens 5-11-1986 (Government Gazette – Volume Two 7880)

Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- World Heritage site values have been maintained
- Significant changes have been since inscription: covering the Monument with a temporary protective shelter (1987). Constructing Visitor Service Facilities and a new entrance to the Archaeological Site (2002), which are not visible from the monument. Constructing pathways within the archaeological site (which are not visible from the Monument). Constructing a temporary metal building site dwelling (2001) (not visible from the monument). Commencement of the First Programme to Restore the North Wing (Deconstructing the structural segments that comprise the North Wing and replacing these after restoration) (2000-2006)
- Major changes which might impact in the future: constructing a temporary metal building site dwelling (an extension to the current building) (2006) (not visible from the monument). Completion of the First Programme to Restore the North Wing. Commencement of the Second Programme to Restore the North Wing (Deconstructing the structural segments that comprise parts of the Eastern and Western Colonnade and replacing these after restoration)

3. Protection

Legislative and Administrative Arrangements

- The site has special legislation: Law 3028/2002 "On the Protection of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage in general". Designation of the general region of the Temple of Apollo Epicurius as an archaeological site. Ministry of Culture decision 44671/1836 Athens 5-11-1986 (Government Gazette – Volume two 7880)
- Following expropriation proceedings, an additional expanse of 4.5 hectares was added to the archaeological site in 1996. Fencing was placed around the greater part of the site in 1996. The monument is guarded round the clock. In 1992 the "Credit Management Fund for the Execution of Archaeological Projects" was established - a legal entity operating under private law, supervised and funded by the Ministry of Culture. The Fund is in charge of managing the funds for this specific project
- The protection arrangements are considered highly effective

4. Management

Use of site/property

- Paid visitor attraction

Management /Administrative Body

- Steering group: the Committee for the Conservation of the Temple of Apollo Epicurius was established in 1975. The committee commenced operations as a Working Group and two years later was subsumed by the Ministry (Presidential Decree 941/1977 Article 96) as a private collective body authorized to supervise the systematic works necessary for the conservation of the monument
- Site manager on full-time basis
- Levels of public authority who are primarily involved with the management of the site: national
- The current management system is highly effective

5. Management Plan

- No management plan
- The management and protection of monuments and archaeological sites in Greece is not based on a concrete management plan. Greece has a system of protection, which is administered centrally by the Ministry of Culture through its regional services, i.e. the Ephorates of Prehistoric & Classical and Byzantine Antiquities. The Ministry of Culture is the competent body supervising the sites and overseeing all works carried out. As far as the safeguarding of cultural and natural heritage is concerned, there are cases where other competent bodies besides the Ministry of Culture are involved. The Ministry of Culture sets out the guidelines and the general policy

for the management of the monuments and sites, which is then implemented by the competent Ephorates. In the case of the Temple of Apollo Epicurius at Bassae the 7th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities is responsible for the management and protection of the monuments

6. Financial Resources

Financial situation

- State budget
- WHF (4 digital triaxial accelometers (KINEMETRICS SSA-1) obtained in 1990). The instruments were installed on structural portions of the monument in order to study the seismic response of the temple
- Public Investment Programme, Integrated Mediterranean Programmes, Lottery Funds (Lotto) – Ministry of Culture, Community Funds (2nd C.S.F. & 3rd C.S.F)
- Sufficient funding for the protection and conservation of the site and for its adequate management

7. Staffing Levels

- 30 staff members are dedicated full-time
- No regular volunteers

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

- Very good: conservation, management
- Good: promotion, interpretation
- Average: Education, visitor management
- Stone carving and shaping, structural renovation and conservation of the architectural members/segments is taking place by highly trained technicians

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

- Staff has been trained in stone carving work at other work sites where restoration projects are underway (Acropolis; Epidaurus; the Roman Forum in Athens) as well as at the School of Fine Arts and Marble Sculpture on Tinos
- Staff training should be ongoing and should be extended in accordance with the requirements and developments of the work. Senior staff should be trained in management and promotion as well as in ways of enhancing the monument and the archaeological site

9. Visitor Management

- Visitor statistics: 30,000 visitors (tickets) 2004
- Visitor facilities: construction of a canteen; WCs; exhibition hall; projection room; guard stand; a shop; a parking area at the facilities and the temple; access points and facilities for the disabled; visitor trail through the archaeological site with rest and viewing points; showing a 10-minute film in English and Greek at the site of the monument; print material

10. Scientific Studies

- Risk assessment; studies related to the value of the site; monitoring exercises; condition surveys; archaeological surveys; transportation studies
- The results of the studies led the scientific community to implement such measures as were necessary for the restoration and conservation of the monument. Concurrently, a programme of enhancing the archaeological site was also performed, in order to increase promotion for the monument and increase the number of visitors

11. Education, Information and Awareness Building

- An adequate number of signs referring to World Heritage site
- World Heritage Convention Emblem used on some publications
- Adequate awareness of World Heritage among: visitors and local authorities
- Need for awareness raising: with suitable training and provision of information; by organising informational days at local communities; by preparing and distributing leaflets with information material (print and electronic)
- Web site available

12. Factors affecting the Property (State of Conservation)

Reactive monitoring reports

- N/A

Conservation interventions

- Conservation, restoration works: placement of a temporary protective shelter on the monument (1987); lightning protection was installed at the archaeological site (1988); the architectural members were positioned in order, inside the

archaeological site (1986 -1990); organisation of the First International Scientific Meeting for the Conservation of the Monument (1995); commencement of the 1st Programme for the restoration of the North Wing of the Temple (2000); landscaping of the archaeological site (2001-2003); test resetting of the architectural members of the Doric entablature in the archaeological site (2004); renovation of the historical buildings of the archaeological site (2003)

- Present state of conservation: very good

Threats and Risks to site

- The site has been effected by natural disasters
- Specific issues: decay of the structural material due to its constituent materials and due to age; seismic activity; extreme weather conditions
- Emergency measures taken: installing anti-seismic netting at the Temple (1984); installing a temporary protection cover on the monument (1987); installing lightning protection at the archaeological site (1988); monitoring and recording the microclimate; monitoring and recording seismic events; commencement of the 1st Programme for the restoration of the North Wing of the Temple (2000) and the conservation of its structural segments

13. Monitoring

- Formal monitoring programme: monitoring and recording microscopic shifts and seismic events; noting damage; recording the current condition of the temple and of the architectural members

14. Conclusions and Recommended Actions

- Main benefits of WH status: conservation, social, economic
- Weaknesses of management: the greater part of the Temple is covered with scaffolding for the anti-seismic protection of the temple. Additionally, the installation of a temporary covering shelter made of synthetic material over the temple (1987) differentiated the image of the Temple as regards the natural landscape. Over the past 17 years it has been proved that the shelter protects the temple's fragile material from the direct effects of weather phenomena and it has contributed decisively in halting the deterioration of the stones. Despite the fact that the form of the shelter expresses its temporary nature, and it differs from the architectural shape of the monument, the scientific committee is exhaustively investigating the matter in order to find a permanent solution for the protection of the temple

Future actions:

- With gradual restoration the monument will revert to its initial geometric form. Concurrently, the defence mechanisms of the building, its structural adequacy and the ability of the structural segments to bear weight will be reinforced. This will result in the removal of the anti-seismic netting