

# GREECE

## Archaeological Site of Delphi

### Brief description

The pan-Hellenic sanctuary of Delphi, where the oracle of Apollo spoke, was the site of the omphalos, the 'navel of the world'. Blending harmoniously with the superb landscape and charged with sacred meaning, Delphi in the 6th century B.C. was indeed the religious centre and symbol of unity of the ancient Greek world.

### 1. Introduction

**Year of Inscription** 1987

#### Agency responsible for site management

- Hellenic Ministry of Culture  
10<sup>th</sup> Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities of Delphi (EPCA).  
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### 2. Statement of Significance

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

#### Justification provided by the State Party

Delphes constitue l'un des lieux les plus vénérables du monde, non seulement à cause de ses antiquités fameuses, mais aussi à cause de son prestige comme un haut-lieu de l'esprit grec. L'autorité de son oracle, grand lieu de sagesse et de divin conseil, ordonna pendant toute l'antiquité, de l'Orient à l'occident, la nature et la vie des hommes. C'est dans ses sanctuaires que l'humanité méditerranéenne s'est instruite pendant des siècles. Ce ne fut pas sans raison que les maximes des sept sages ont été gravées sur les murs du pronaos du temple d'Apollon. Sous cet aspect on pourrait dire que Delphes c'est le lieu le plus apte à attester la valeur des principes de l'hellénisme et que son influence oraculaire a aidé à la défense de l'idéal classique. C'est bien à Delphes que l'idée amphictyonique s'est transformée en idéal universel et c'est à bon droit qu'elle c'est identifiée avec l'idée delphique. L'existence à Delphes du Centre Européen culturel en est la preuve.

Au cours des siècles, Delphes, centre d'activité religieuse et politique par excellence, était devenu aussi, comme on sait, un centre d'art. Parmi les premiers sanctuaires grecs peu furent aussi riches en chef-d'œuvres que Delphes.

C'est pourquoi d'une simple promenade à travers les salles du Musée delphique, on peut emporter une vue d'ensemble, précise et complète, sur l'évolution de l'art grec. De ce point de vue c'est le privilège de Delphes que presque toutes les phases et tous les aspects de cette production y soient représentés souvent même par des pièces capitales.

#### As provided in ICOMOS/IUCN evaluation

Delphi meets five criteria for inclusion on the World Heritage List.

- Criterion I. The layout of Delphi, like that of Machu Picchu (which was included on the World Heritage List in 1983) is a unique artistic achievement. Mt. Parnassus is a veritable masterpiece and is where a series of monuments were built whose modular elements -terraces, temples, treasuries, etc.- combine to form a strong expression of the physical and moral values of a site which may be described as magical.

- Criterion II. Delphi had an immense impact throughout the ancient world. In the 6th century B.C., the kings of Lydia sent valuable gifts to the Sanctuary; when the Temple of Apollo was destroyed by fire in 548 B.C. foreign benefactors, including Amasis, contributed financially to its reconstruction. Major conflicts during the 5th century B.C. were echoed at Delphi: the tripod of Gelon of Syracuse commemorated the victory of the Greeks over the Carthaginians in 481; the Athenian gate bore testimony to the defeat of Xerxes's fleet in 478; the palm tree of Eurymedon hailed the victory over the Persians in 468; and the votive offering of the Navarchs, that of the Spartans over the Athenians in 404. But during the Hellenistic period, Delphi had an international aura. The Stoa of Attale, the monument to Prusias of Bithynia, and the statue of Eumene II, king of Pergamum, bear testimony to the interest monarchs of the 2nd century A.D. showed in Pythian Apollo. Later, in 125 A.D., the emperor Hadrian had a statue in his honor built at Delphi. The Sanctuary at Delphi, the object of great generosity and the crossroads of a wide variety of influences, was in turn imitated throughout the ancient world. Its influence extended as far as Bactria, following the conquest of Asia by Alexander the Great. Even pillaging of the Sanctuary by the emperor Nero and by Constantine

the Great, who transported spoils from it to Rome and Constantinople, added to the artistic influence of Delphi.

- Criterion III. Delphi bears a unique testimony to the religion and civilization of ancient Greece. At the legendary site where Apollo slew the

serpent Python, oranian cults replaced chthonian cults and introduced the old heritage of myths originating from primitive times. The Delphic oracle, over which four sacred wars were fought, is one of the focal points of Greek political history. The Theatre and the Stadium, the site every four years of the Pythian games, are meccas of community celebrations reflecting triumphant Hellenism.

- Criterion IV. Delphi, situated in a magnificent natural setting which is still intact, is an outstanding example of a great Panhellenic sanctuary.

- Criterion VI. According to the ancients, the Temple of Apollo was where the Omphalos was located, that is, the navel of the universe, the centre of the earth. Delphi is consequently directly and tangibly associated with a belief of manifest universal significance.

#### **Committee Decision**

Bureau (1986): The Bureau was informed by ICOMOS of the dangers threatening the site of Delphi, for which the Greek authorities had presented a nomination to be examined in 1987: the construction project for a bauxite processing plant to the West of and upwind from the temple threatens a degree of atmospheric pollution very dangerous for the preservation of the site. The Bureau authorized the Chairman to write to the Greek authorities to draw their attention to this situation and inform them that if the project were to go through it would be difficult for the Bureau to give favourable consideration to this nomination when it came to be examined at the eleventh session, in spite of the fact that the property concerned was among the most precious legacies of mankind.

Bureau (1987): The Bureau took note with satisfaction of a cable from the Greek Minister of Cultural Affairs, announcing that the planned aluminium plant would not be built at Aghia Euthimia, but 55 kms away from Delphi. Furthermore, the observer from Greece specified that the aluminium would be transported towards Beotia and that the servicing of the plant would be carried out from the same direction, that is, to the North of Mt. Parnassus, thus not endangering Delphi.

- 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**

- Status of boundaries of the site: adequate
- Buffer zone: adequate; the protection system, which consists in the two zones of the Delphic landscape (Zones A & B) is adequate for the protection of the Delphic monuments and their surroundings. The wider area of Delphi, which extends to the boundaries of the «Delphic landscape», includes a number of monuments. The buffer zone was delimited by a ministerial decision, which was later incorporated in state legislation: Government Gazette 259/B/25-04-1991 «On the protection / buffer zones A and B of the Delphic landscape»

#### **Status of Authenticity/Integrity**

- World Heritage site values have been maintained
- Given that the site is adequately protected, due to a strict legislative framework no changes in the authenticity/ integrity of the Delphic monuments are expected to take place

### **3. Protection**

#### **Legislative and Administrative Arrangements**

- Special legislation: Through the Ministry of Culture decision 13624/728/27.03.91, Government Gazette 259/B/91 (On Zones A and B of the «Delphic Landscape»), and the 1266/91 Ministry of Culture decision («On land uses and building conditions in Zone B»), the archaeological site of Delphi is part of a most extended geographical area of landscape and monuments under protection. Building is prohibited in the area of the slopes of Mt. Parnassus and the olive-grove, while there is also a protection zone corresponding to an area which extends in two prefectures; within this area, the construction of small farm houses is permitted in lots of 20,000 square meters
- Significant changes on measures for the site since the time of inscription; In accordance with Law 1892/90/ Ministerial Decision 1266/91 (which complemented and extended the scope of protection of the 1972 designation of the archaeological site), the broader geographical area surrounding Delphi, was divided in 2

zones protecting the Delphic landscape- Zone A where building is prohibited and Zone B where building is permitted under certain conditions. Concurrently, the National Board for Land Planning has placed the area of the Delphic landscape "under protection order"

- The protection arrangements are considered highly effective

#### **4. Management**

##### **Use of site/property**

- Paid visitor attraction

##### **Management /Administrative Body**

- No steering group
- Site manager on full-time basis
- Management by the State Party under protective legislation
- The current management system is sufficiently 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 Delphi the 10th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities is responsible for the management and protection of the monuments

#### **6. Financial Resources**

##### **Financial situation**

- National Resources, European Union- 3<sup>rd</sup> Community Support Framework
- WHF: During the 14<sup>th</sup> Session of 1990, the World Heritage Committee acknowledged the need to acquire (1) sandblasting machinery and (7) dehumidifiers, for the conservation of

archaeological finds on display in the Museum of Delphi

- Sufficient funding for the adequate management of the site
- Funding for the protection and conservation of the site not always adequate

#### **7. Staffing Levels**

- Number of staff: 27
- All collaborators working with the Ephorate are mainly assigned with museum work. They are highly specialized and very experienced
- The staff resources are not adequate to protect, maintain and promote the site; there is a need to hire new staff: archaeologists, architects, conservators and guarding staff

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

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

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

- Guarding staff for antiquities and conservators of antiquities, trained at public Institutes for Professional training (IEK) in Amphissa, is already employed as temporary personnel at the Museum and the Archaeological Site of Delphi. Training and acquiring experience in the fields of conservation, guarding and exhibitions of antiquities
- Training available for stakeholders on the site

#### **9. Visitor Management**

- 333,910 visitors (ticket counting), 2004
- Visitor facilities: a site museum operates next to the archaeological property, where the movable finds from the site excavation are on display. The museum was recently renovated and the exhibition renewed. A kiosk is offering information material and housing the ticket office for the archaeological site, a new store where books and casts of antiquities are sold, new route for the people with disabilities providing access from the Stadium area to the Sanctuary of Apollo, which is located to a level below that of the Stadium. Furthermore, new lavatory facilities were built

### 10. Scientific Studies

- Risk assessment; studies related to the value of the site; archaeological surveys
- The seismology laboratory at the University of Athens performed measurements of noises in the soil of the archaeological site area. A seismology and pollution survey, for controlling the wear induced to monuments by vibrations and exhaust fumes from large vehicles circulating along the national road, showed that there is a problem caused by vibrations and pollutants in the area. Two ad hoc committees were formed by Ministry of Culture senior staff. The committees ascertained the existence of a number of problems, such as the erosion of rocky slopes. In order to deal with pollutants and vibrations from vehicles, there is an existing proposal (transportation study) concerning the deviation of the national road to a location below that of the sanctuary and to pave the current national road for pedestrian use. Various texts and studies have been written on the monuments of the site.

### 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, businesses, local authorities
- Awareness will be raised through the intensification of the educational programmes that the 10<sup>th</sup> EPKA of Delphi has already undertaken
- In 1999 was put in place the educational programme "At the sanctuary of Delphi" to familiarize students of primary education with antiquities
- Heritage days: the designation of the Delphi property as a World Heritage Site is often emphasized at the re-display of the Museum of Delphi. The site's World Heritage status has also been stressed for the last two years during the events for the European Days of Cultural Heritage, which are held at the ancient Gymnasium
- Web site available

### 12. Factors affecting the Property (State of Conservation)

#### Reactive monitoring reports

- World Heritage Bureau sessions: 16<sup>th</sup> (1992); 17<sup>th</sup> (1993)
- World Heritage Committee sessions: 16<sup>th</sup> (1992); 17<sup>th</sup> (1993)

#### Conservation interventions

- Conservation; restoration works: during 1986-1993 the Directorate of Restoration undertook support work at the slopes at Castalia fountain-house. In 1991, the French Archaeological School performed excavation work- elaboration of a restoration study of the base of the chariot of the Rhodians, at the sanctuary of Apollo. During 1999-2004, the Directorate of Restoration carried out conservation/ restoration work of the epistylum of the treasury of the Athenians: the iron elements from the previous restoration were replaced with titanium alloy, a material considered invulnerable to erosion. In 1991 after specific study by the Ministry for the Environment, Town Planning and Public Works was covered and planted with trees the western part of the Mornos cement dyke-aqueduct. During the last five years the 10th EPKA realized a number of small conservation projects of the monuments inside the sanctuary of Apollo. In the eighties, the two ad hoc committees ascertained the existence of a number of problems, such as the erosion of rocky slopes, land slides, erosion due to vegetation, wear on the unprotected inscriptions, wear from the visitor's walking in the site. Ever since, various solutions to the above mentioned issues have been under way
- Present state of conservation: adequate

#### Threats and Risks to site

- Development pressure, environmental pressure, natural disasters, visitor/tourism pressure
- Specific issues: the existence of a number of problems has been ascertained - such as the erosion of rocky slopes, land slides, erosion due to vegetation, wear on the uncovered inscriptions, wear from the visitor's walking in the site. The broader area of Delphi, being a transformogenic geophysical area, in the periphery of the great tectonic fault of Central Greece, has been faced with the same problems since the ancient times: earthquakes and land slides threatening the monuments, erosion of soils and sedimentations, wear of materials such as marble, bricks, periodic

vegetation growth – and lately, pollutants and noise, vehicle vibrations

- Emergency measures taken: support work for the slopes, unnecessary growth lopped away, construction of a shelter for the inscriptions, placement of ropes to surround monuments, installation of an automatic fire-fighting system. In order to deal with pollutants and vibrations from vehicles, there is an existing proposal to for the deviation of the national road to a location below that of the sanctuary and to pave the current national road for pedestrian use. A special earthquake-proof study has been elaborated for the new building of the Museum of Delphi, which houses the finds from the Delphic excavations

Directorate for Antiquities and the Directorate of Restoration

### **13. Monitoring**

- Formal monitoring programme: the programme is based on the monitoring of specific indicators, formulated on the basis of the designation of the site as an architectural compound with a universal value, and the designation of its monuments as monuments with an outstanding architectural and aesthetic value, representing various artistic trends

### **14. Conclusions and Recommended Actions**

- Main benefits of WH status: conservation, social
- During 1987-2004, through a series of small projects, Delphi succeeded in curbing the indicators for natural wear (erosion, precipitations, danger from collapse). The cornice of the treasury of the Athenians was restored, as well as the base of the Chariot of the Rhodians; the issue of the rainwater run-off was dealt with; a new automatic fire-fighting system was installed; the site now has an information material kiosk and a modern point of sale; a new access route for the people with disabilities was constructed
- Weaknesses of management: A pending issue is the study for the deviation of a section of the national road to a location wherefrom vibrations and pollutants from vehicles will not affect the monuments. Another pending issue is the final study for the support work of the Xystos wall in the Gymnasium

#### **Future actions:**

- The 10<sup>th</sup> EPKA forwards proposals related to addressing these weaknesses, to the General