

GREECE

Acropolis, Athens

Brief description

Illustrating the civilizations, myths and religions that flourished in Greece over a period of more than 1,000 years, the Acropolis, the site of four of the greatest masterpieces of classical Greek art – the Parthenon, the Propylaea, the Erechtheum and the Temple of Athena Nike – can be seen as symbolizing the idea of world heritage.

1. Introduction

Year of Inscription

1987

Agency responsible for site management

- Hellenic Ministry of Culture
1st Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities
Makrygianni 2-4
11742 Athens, Greece
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Website: www.culture.gr

2. Statement of Significance

Inscription Criteria

C i, ii, iii, iv, vi

Justification provided by the State Party

L'inscription de l'ensemble monumental de l'Acropole sur la liste du patrimoine mondial est pleinement justifié parce qu'il représente une réalisation artistique unique et constitue un chef-d'œuvre de l'esprit créateur de l'homme, parce qu'il a exercé une influence énorme sur le développement ultérieur de l'architecture et de la sculpture monumentale et parce qu'il est étroitement associé à des idées, événements et à des personnages qui ont eu une importance et une signification très considérables pour l'histoire de la civilisation humaine (Démocratie Athénienne du Ve s. av. J.Chr.)

As provided in ICOMOS/IUCN evaluation

ICOMOS is pleased by the long-awaited proposal to include the Athenian Acropolis on the World Heritage List and notes that this exceptional cultural property meets criteria I, II, III, IV and VI of the "Guidelines".

- Criterion I. The Athenian Acropolis is the supreme expression of the adaptation of architecture to a natural site. This grand composition of perfectly-balanced massive structures creates a monumental landscape of unique beauty consisting of a complete series of masterpieces of the 5th century B.C.: the Parthenon by Pheidias, Ictinos and Callicrates (447-432); the Propylaea by Mnesicles (437-432); the Temple of Athena Nike by Mnesicles and Callicrates (448-407); and Erechtheion, completed in 406.

- Criterion II. The monuments of the Athenian Acropolis have exerted an exceptional influence, not only in Greco-Roman antiquity, during which time in the Mediterranean world they were considered exemplary models, but in contemporary times as well. Throughout the world, Neo-Classic monuments have been inspired by the Parthenon or by the Propylaea.

- Criterion III. From myth to institutionalised cult, the Athenian Acropolis, by its precision and diversity, bears a unique testimony to the religions of Ancient Greece. It is the sacred temple from which sprung fundamental legends about the city. There, in the presence of Cecrops, the first mythical king of Athens who arbitrated their contest, Athena and Poseidon fought for possession of the country. Poseidon made a source of salt water spring forth; Athena offered the olive tree which, cut by the Persians in 480, grew again the following year. The site of the Acropolis is where another mythical king, Erechtheas, was born subsequent to the attempted rape of Athena by Hephaestus. It is also where Aegeus, believing that his son Theseus had been devoured by the Minotaur, threw himself into the sea which now bears his name. Beginning in the 6th century, the Athenian Acropolis was the place where myths and beliefs gave rise to temples, altars and statues corresponding to an extreme diversity of cults which have brought us the Athenian religion in all its richness and complexity. Athena was venerated as the goddess of the city (Athena Polias); as the goddess of war (Athena Promachos); as the goddess of victory (Athena Nike); as Limes, the protective goddess of crafts (Athena Ergane), etc. Most of her functions are glorified at the main cult temple dedicated to her, the Parthenon, the temple of the maiden-goddess.

- Criterion IV. The Athenian Acropolis illustrates civilisations of Greece over a period of more than a millennium. From the royal palace of kings in the 15th century B.C. and the Pelasgic walls of the first fortification, to the Odeon, constructed in 161 A.D. by Herod Atticus, a unique series of public monuments was built and conserved in one of the

densest spaces of the Mediterranean.

- Criterion VI. The Acropolis is directly and tangibly associated with events and ideas which have never faded over the course of history. Its monuments are still living testimonies of the teachings of Plato and Aristotle, the Philippics of Demosthenes and the preachings of St. Paul. These monuments are the memory of a precious part of the cultural heritage of mankind.

Committee Decision

The Committee made no statement.

- 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
- Additional change proposed by State Party to UNESCO's official description of the site

Boundaries and Buffer Zone

- Status of boundaries of the site: adequate
- No buffer zone has been defined; buffer zone is not needed to protect the site as other measures exist to protect the site instead of a buffer zone: there is an existing designation made in 1983 (Government Gazette 387/B/5.7.83 – Ministerial Decision Φ01/ 12970 / 503/ 25.2.83). The designated area includes the hill of the Acropolis extending to the following streets: Dionysiou Areopagitou, Vyronos, Lysikratous, Adrianou, Aiolou, Pandrosou and Areos. The archaeological site is fenced and surrounded by other fenced archaeological properties: those of the Northern and Southern Slopes of the Acropolis and that of the Ancient Agora. Furthermore, on the northern and eastern foothills lies the designated (listed) traditional settlement of Plaka. The Acropolis archaeological site, as well as the surrounding archaeological sites, is protected by Law 3028/2002 'On the Protection of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage in general'. The protection provided under Law 3028/2002 is wider than the designation of buffer zones since article 6 § 4 stipulates that 'the ancient immovable properties' ('Law 3028/2002 provides that ancient monuments' are all antiquities dated until 1830), are protected by law without need for the issuance of any administrative act'. Furthermore, article 10 § 3 stipulates that 'the establishment or operation

of an industrial,...enterprise,...the execution of any kind of technical or other work as well as building activity in the vicinity of an antiquity shall be permitted only upon authorization by the Minister of Culture following an opinion by the Central Archaeological Council. Authorization shall be granted if the distance from an immovable monument or the relation with it is such that the monument is not threatened with direct or indirect damage due to the nature of the work, or type of business or the activity"

Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- World Heritage site values have been maintained
- The completion of the ongoing restoration works will maximize the protection of the monuments of the Acropolis and greatly ensure their integrity; it will underline their beauty and artistic values and make their architectural form and their function more comprehensible

3. Protection

Legislative and Administrative Arrangements

- The provisions of Law 3028/2002 "On the Protection of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage in general"
- The protection arrangements are considered sufficiently effective

Actions proposed:

- The programme of conservation and enhancement works must also be extended to the area surrounding the monuments

4. Management

Use of site/property

- Paid visitor attraction

Management /Administrative Body

- Steering group: the Committee for the Conservation of the Acropolis Monuments (ESMA)
- Site manager on full-time basis
- Levels of public authority who are primarily involved with the management of the site: National; The monument / archaeological site is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Culture – the 1st Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities
- 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 Acropolis the 1st Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities is responsible for the management and protection of the monuments

6. Financial Resources

Financial situation

- National Resources (State Budget)
- The European Union (Third Community Support Framework)
- Sufficient for the protection and conservation of the site; insufficient for the adequate management of the site

7. Staffing Levels

- Number of staff: 373
- support of regular volunteers: a limited number of conservation students undertaking their field practice are employed

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

- Very good: conservation, promotion, interpretation, education
- Good: management of the site, visitor management

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

- The permanent scientific staff, i.e. the archaeologists, architects and conservators takes educational leave during which they keep abreast of scientific matters and elaborate

studies. Opportunities also exist to attend conferences and seminars. Staff employed in the management can also participate in training seminars organized by the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Public Administration etc.

- Special seminars on the management of cultural heritage should be organised
- Training available for stakeholders

9. Visitor Management

- Visitor Statistics: 1,088,117 visitors (tickets counting), 2004
- Visitor facilities: ticket office, shops, cloakroom, lavatory facilities, elevator for the people with disabilities, office for the guides (off the archaeological site), canteen (off the archaeological site)

10. Scientific Studies

- Risk assessment, studies related to the value of the site, archaeological surveys, transportation studies

11. Education, Information and Awareness Building

- Not enough signs referring to World Heritage site
- World Heritage Convention Emblem used on some publications
- Adequate awareness of World Heritage among: visitors, local communities, businesses, local authorities
- There are educational programmes for children, active participation in archaeological exhibitions, conferences, renewal of the thematic exhibitions of the existing museum, the presentation of new material that is undergoing conservation, book editions and audiovisual material etc.
- Web site available

12. Factors affecting the Property (State of Conservation)

Reactive monitoring reports

- World Heritage Committee sessions: 25th (2001); 26th (2002); 27th (2003); 28th (2004).

Conservation interventions

- Conservation and restoration works: 1) 1979 - 1987: Restoration of the Erechtheum. 2.) 1986 - 1990: restoration of the eastern colonnade of the Parthenon. 3) 1986 to date: restoration of

the eastern portico (pronaos), the walls of the nave, the entablature of the western portico or opisthonaos, the northern colonnade of the Parthenon. In 1992-93 the western frieze was removed and transported to the Museum of the Acropolis. Its cleaning was completed in 2004. 4) Propylaea: conservation and restoration of the coffered roof panels on the northern section of the central building. Restoration of the southern wall. Restoration of the eastern porch (*prostasis*). 5) The Temple of Athena Nike (ongoing since 1998): the frieze stones were removed and exhibited in the Acropolis Museum. The temple was deconstructed, underwent conservation and then was restored. 6) The rock was covered and paths were formed. 7) 2004: A special elevator for the people with disabilities was installed along with special pathways. 8) 2004: the western frieze of the Parthenon was exhibited in the Acropolis Museum after the successful completion of its conservation. 9) The rocks of the Acropolis were secured along the northern and the southern hillsides

- Present state of conservation: good

Threats and Risks to site

- Environmental pressure, natural disasters, visitor / tourism pressure
- Specific issues mentioned: 1) Atmospheric pollution is one of the factors that cause damage to the surface of the monument; 2) Wear on the rock from visitors' walking
- Emergency measures taken: 1) Research was conducted and measures have been taken in order to reduce damage caused by atmospheric pollution, with the use of reversible materials. Moreover, the architectural sculptures that remained on the monuments were moved to the Acropolis Museum and were replaced by copies (e.g. the Caryatids, the Western Frieze etc.). 2) Pathways were created, and, where necessary, are maintained on an annual basis

13. Monitoring

- Formal monitoring programme: the Committee for the Conservation of the Acropolis Monuments in collaboration with the 1st Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities and the Acropolis Restoration Service meets regularly to monitor the restoration programme and to take measures to deal with any particular problems that may arise

14. Conclusions and Recommended Actions

- Main benefits of WH status: conservation, economic
- Extensive restoration programmes
- Weaknesses: concerning the management of a large number of visitors to a single place

Future actions:

- A visitor coordination centre should be established that would confer with travel agencies and schools to coordinate visits