

GREECE

Medieval City of Rhodes

Brief description

The Order of St John of Jerusalem occupied Rhodes from 1309 to 1523 and set about transforming the city into a stronghold. It subsequently came under Turkish and Italian rule. With the Palace of the Grand Masters, the Great Hospital and the Street of the Knights, the Upper Town is one of the most beautiful urban ensembles of the Gothic period. In the Lower Town, Gothic architecture coexists with mosques, public baths and other buildings dating from the Ottoman period.

1. Introduction

Year(s) of Inscription 1988

Agency responsible for site management

- Hellenic Ministry of Culture -
4th Ephorate of Byzantine and Post Byzantine Antiquities
Ippoton, 85100 Rhodes
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Website: www.culture.gr

2. Statement of Significance

Inscription Criteria C (ii), (iv), (v)

Justification provided by the State Party

(1987): La ville médiévale de Rhodes conforme aux critères décrits sous nos. i-vi du verso, c'est à dire:

(i) Développement d'une architecture médiévale unique à Rhodes, produite par l'adaptation des formes architecturales françaises et espagnoles aux conditions locales et le style indigène byzantin

(ii) Le tissu urbain ancien et les fortifications massives médiévales, reliques des périodes de forte influence politique et culturelle de Rhodes ont déterminé la forme de la ville fortifiée d'aujourd'hui

(iii) Voir ci-dessus

(iv) Les fortifications sont un témoin unique en pureté de la période transitionnelle d'adaptation aux exigences du canon

(v - vi) Plusieurs exemples de l'architecture des Croisés, et de l'adaptation des structures pour

servir à des cultures différentes (Romaine, Chrétienne orientale, des Croisés, Musulmane)

As provided in ICOMOS evaluation

ICOMOS, recalling that in 1980 the modern capital of the order of St. John of Jerusalem, which was established in 1530 at La Valetta, was inscribed on the World Heritage List, is a fortiori favorable to the inclusion of the city of Rhodes, on the basis of criteria II, IV and V.

- Criterion II. The fortifications of Rhodes, a "Frankish" town long considered to be impregnable, exerted an influence throughout the eastern Mediterranean basin at the end of the Middle Ages.

- Criterion IV. This cultural property is an outstanding example of an architectural ensemble which illustrates the significant period of history in which a military/hospital order founded during the Crusades survived in the eastern Mediterranean area in a context characterised by an obsessive fear of siege. Rhodes is one of the most beautiful urban ensembles of the Gothic period. The fact that this medieval city is located on an island in the Aegean Sea, that it was on the site of an ancient Greek city, and that it commands a port formerly embellished by the Colossus erected by Chares of Lindos, one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world, only adds to its interest. Finally, it must be noted that the chain of history was not broken in 1523 but rather continued up to 1912 with the additions of valuable Islamic monuments, such as mosques, baths and houses.

- Criterion V. With its Frankish and Ottoman buildings the old town of Rhodes is an important ensemble of traditional human settlement, characterized by successive and complex phenomena of acculturation. Contact with the traditions of the Dodecanese changed the forms of Gothic architecture and building after 1523 combined vernacular forms resulting from the meeting of two worlds with decorative elements of Ottoman origin. All the built-up elements dating before 1912 have become vulnerable because of the evolution in living conditions and they must be protected as much as the great religious, civil and military monuments, the churches, monasteries, mosques, baths, palaces, forts, gates and ramparts.

Committee Decision

Bureau (1988): The Bureau recommended inscription of this property, having been informed that all conservation work on the architectural heritage of Rhodes would be carried out under the

control of the Greek Ministry of Culture and in accordance with the Venice Charter and the Toledo International Charter for the conservation of historic towns and urban areas.

Session (1988): It should be stated that the influence of Rhodes fortifications mentioned under criterion (ii) particularly applies to Bodrum, the former Halicarnassus.

- Statement of Significance does not adequately define the outstanding universal value of the site. At the time of initial inscription the WH 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
- Buffer zone: protective legislation has been enacted at various stages since the beginning of the 20th century. It protects the listed historical settlement, the fortifications and the moat, the parks planted with trees and the surrounding coastal zone. The area has been under development pressure in the last decades, which brought changes. Therefore, a revision of the delimitation of the buffer zone is deemed necessary in order to take into account these changes. The buffer zone was defined through a designation by the Italian administration, which was later ratified by the Greek State
 - Ministerial Decisions of 1959, (Government Gazette 24/B/22-1-1960), 2001 (Government Gazette 1093/B/21-8-2001)

Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- World Heritage site values have been maintained
- The ongoing and scheduled restorations of monuments, along with the completion of the sewerage network will contribute to the protection of the monument complex against damage. Given that the biggest pressure exercised on the site has been its use for tourist exploitation, there is a need for an improvement in the management and adequate funding for infrastructure and restoration projects are ensured

3. Protection

Legislative and Administrative Arrangements

- Apart from the institutional framework protecting the site, a town-urban planning scheme is formally in force. The latter is contradictory to the institutional framework, and thus, it is, not implemented. This planning scheme ought to be replaced by a land use plan delimiting areas of purely residential use and areas of tourist development in order to protect the settlement against damage brought about by the exploitation of historical buildings
- Significant changes: a) a new Archaeological law was voted in 2002, and some of the provisions pertaining to historical settlements require the enactment of complementary legislation. b) The programme contract between the Ministry of Culture-Archaeological Receipts Fund and the Municipality of Rhodes, in force for about 20 years, has expired. The contract involved the fields of restoration, enhancement of spaces and research in the settlement. c) The Credit Management Fund for the Execution of Archaeological Projects is operating in Rhodos; its scope is the restoration and presentation of ecclesiastical monuments within the settlement and of problematic fortification sections surrounding the settlement. d) The medieval moat was proclaimed an archaeological site through a Ministry of Culture Decision 31095/942/7-12-2001
- The protection arrangements are considered sufficiently effective

Actions proposed:

- Revision of the boundaries and the buffer zone, regarding specific protection and management issues for the site

4. Management

Use of site/property

- Urban centre; some of the sites are paid visitor attractions

Management /Administrative Body

- Management by the State Party, under protective legislation
- A coordinator needed
- Levels of public authority who are primarily involved with the management of the site: national; local
- The current management system is not sufficiently effective
- The management of the site and its co-ordination in particular, are mainly the

responsibility of the 4th EBA and the Archaeological Receipts Fund. The 4th EBA is in charge of conservation works, with the occasional assistance of other bodies. Regarding the improvement in the management: specific problems are identified and ideas are exchanged. However, there is a need for a holistic approach.

5. 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. 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 Medieval City of Rhodes the 4th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities is responsible for the management and protection of the monuments

6. Financial Resources

Financial situation

- State budget (Ministry of Culture, Archaeological Receipts Fund); Municipality of Rhodes; private individuals aiming at the conservation of their real estate; profits generated by many businesses in the Medieval City of Rhodes.
- 2nd and 3rd Community Support Framework of the EU
- Insufficient

7. Staffing Levels

- Number of staff: 24

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

- Good: interpretation
- Average: conservation
- Bad: management, education
- Very bad: promotion, visitor management
- Adequate: restoration, excavation work, plotting-photographing

- The staff resources to protect, maintain and promote the site are not adequate: there are shortages in human resources in various mandatory specialities.

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

- Apprenticeship under the supervision of specialized personnel in situ, mainly in the fields of restoration techniques and support work, excavation and conservation
- Training needs: it is imperative to further train the personnel in new technologies, and in particular in the use of a personal computer

9. Visitor Management

- No visitor statistics
- Visitor facilities: In the medieval city, it is the Municipality and private individuals that ensure the existence of facilities for the service of visitors. A particular problem is the lack of parking spaces. When it comes to individual monuments that are open to the public, facilities are inadequate. Due to the historical significance of buildings, it is difficult to incorporate facilities for visitors, in particular those with mobility problems. For the time being, in some of them there are lavatory facilities, a cafeteria and a point of sale, chemical WC. There is also a store selling Archaeological Receipts Fund items
- Visitor paths are described in the guides available at bookstores
- Visitor needs: with regard to museums alone: access improvement, amelioration of safety measures, air-conditioning/dehumidifiers, facilities for the people with disabilities, organizing an information centre for the visitors, creation of a website for the site. With respect to visitor access in the settlement in general, greater effort is needed to implement regulations pertaining to the operation of commercial businesses and to the parking and traffic control of vehicles throughout the year

10. Scientific Studies

- Archaeological surveys, restoration studies, landscaping studies, studies for the property status, land uses, social stratification of the inhabitants

- Numerous studies on individual historical buildings elaborated by public bodies, as well as studies elaborated by private individuals for the restoration of privately owned real estate. The topographic survey and photogrammetric drawing of the entire medieval fortification, as well as the topographic survey of the entire urban tissue of the medieval city, have always constituted important background material for many interventions
- The studies on the property status and social stratification of the inhabitants were used in order to choose the monuments eligible for restoration, decide on the landscaping of public spaces and draft a land use plan

11. Education, Information and Awareness Building

- An adequate number of signs referring to World Heritage site
- World Heritage Convention Emblem is used on publications
- Adequate awareness of World Heritage among: local authorities
- Need for awareness raising: further publicity, educational programmes for students, administrative measures
- The inscription has played a role in promoting the property mainly by the Municipality of Rhodes, which held the presidency of the World Cultural Heritage cities and organized an International Congress in 2003. When there is staff available, the educational programmes that are put in place are thematic
- Web site available (web pages at the Ministry of Culture's official website)

12. Factors affecting the Property (State of Conservation)

Reactive monitoring reports

- World Heritage Bureau sessions: 19th (1995)
- World Heritage Committee sessions: 18th (1994)

Conservation interventions

- Many restoration projects i.g. of the Street of the Knights, the Hospitaller Hospice of St. Catherine, the "Admiralty", the Caretto Bastion and the ramparts of St. John's Gate, of medieval wall sections, three medieval mills, of the medieval monasteries of St. Bernardine and St. John, 20 traditional residences and two medieval buildings, the Yeni Hammam Baths, the Ottoman Court House, the Suleymaniye

Djami etc., construction of drainage and subterranean facilities/landscaping and enhancement of the medieval moat, clearing works to remove earth-fill, repair work and enhancements, watertight works, repair works, enhancement and presentation of the defence line, installation of subterranean water supply and sewerage network in 50% of the medieval city, landscaping of open spaces, conservation/enhancement of the medieval fountains in the medieval city, enhancement of the archaeological site of the ancient fortifications, etc. Many projects in progress; many excavations

- Present state of conservation: patchy

Threats and Risks to site

- Natural disaster(s); number of inhabitants; visitor/tourism pressure; deficient implementation of the protective legislation; lack of coordination in management issues at the local level
- Specific issues: decreasing number of permanent inhabitants; amongst natural disasters, the seismicity of the broader area is a permanent and existing menace for the historical buildings of the medieval city. Except for the problems/risks, it is imperative not only to continue the funding of restoration/enhancement projects in the medieval city, but also to ensure a continuous flow of funds throughout the year, in order for a more effective absorption of funds and a smoother operation of works in the buildings/worksites. Besides, the projects that have started since 1988 have produced valuable know-how, which must not be lost through personnel cutbacks
- Emergency measures taken: a land use map, proposals for the incorporation of projects in the 4th C.S.F. of EU

13. Monitoring

- Formal monitoring programme
- Guarding personnel visits all sites/properties where building works are in progress, on a daily basis and monitors the situation in the historic centre of the city of Rhodes. This is done under the supervision of an experienced archaeologist and architect who intervene whenever it is required in order to ensure the integrity of the monument complex. Apart from that, an archive with photographs is kept showing the interventions undertaken in all buildings in the medieval city. A permit by the 4th EBA, the competent body for the residential area, is required for minor interventions, whereas for

major interventions it is necessary to have a permit granted by the Central Archaeological Council, which has its seat in Athens. There are no reports made with key indicators etc because the experience of the permanent personnel and the continuous monitoring of worksites constitute the best guarantee for the protection of the property

14. Conclusions and Recommended Actions

- Main benefits of WH status: conservation; management; International acclaim has a positive impact on public opinion, and respectively affects the way the broader public sees the monument
- Restoration works were completed in a number of historical buildings, and potential factors of degradation of the quality of the inhabitants' life were eradicated. There has been some progress in the improvement of infrastructure
- Strength/Weaknesses of management: there are pending issues regarding the urban plan and land uses, need to fully implement the protective legal framework, lack of appropriate coordination in management issues, need to maintain a stable flow of funds, centralized bureaucratic procedures

Future actions:

- The protective legal framework will be improved, contradictions regarding the urban plan and land uses will be lifted