

GREECE

Delos

Brief description

According to Greek mythology, Apollo was born on this tiny island in the Cyclades archipelago. Apollo's sanctuary attracted pilgrims from all over Greece and Delos was a prosperous trading port. The island bears traces of the succeeding civilizations in the Aegean world, from the 3rd millennium B.C. to the palaeochristian era. The archaeological site is exceptionally extensive and rich and conveys the image of a great cosmopolitan Mediterranean port.

1. Introduction

Year(s) of Inscription 1990

Agency responsible for site management

- Hellenic Ministry of Culture
21st Ephorate of Prehistorical and Classical Antiquities
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2. Statement of Significance

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

Justification provided by the State Party

Almost all the Greek and Latin writers have spoken incidentally of Delos and many of them have composed poems or special treatises upon the island. Many of these works have disappeared, but later writers, especially Athenaeus, have preserved the recollection of them. In the extant literature it is evident the pre-eminence of the island in religious tradition and history. In the oldest Delian hymn extant, the so-called Homeric Hymn to Apollo it is described the great festival, or panegyris, which had become famous by the beginning of the eighth century B.C., and to which men and women came from the islands and coasts of the Aegean to honour Apollo with songs and dances, games and contests. Additional evidence of the importance of Delos throughout the ancient time comes from several hundreds of inscriptions which were found in the Sanctuary. But apart from the literary

epigraphic evidence, the monuments that have been excavated up to now speak most eloquently for the grandeur of the sacred island. There is no other town of this period so well preserved. Indeed, setting apart Thera and Pompeii, both of which belong to different periods and do not have the sacred character of Delos, in no other place has the visitor such a vivid experience of an ancient town with its roads, shops and houses, the temples, the theatre, the stadium. The objects found there complete the picture of every-day life and give valuable information about the inhabitants. The sculpture found in Delos form a unique collection representing all the phases of Greek art from the Archaic period to Early Christian. The mosaics are incomparable and the frescoes are considered among the best of the period.

Ancients believed that the Light was born on Delos, the birthplace of Apollo, the Sun-God and Artemis, the Moon-Goddess. To the thousands of visitors, that come from all over the world, it is quite apparent that this immortal Light still shines illuminating a past civilisation which was Europe's cradle and wet nurse.

As provided in ICOMOS evaluation

ICOMOS recommends that Delos be included on the World Heritage List on the basis of Criteria II, III, IV and VI.

- Criterion II. The island of Delos is among the first important Greek sites in the Aegean world to have captured the attention of archaeologists. As early as 1455, Cyriac of Ancona, one of the founding fathers of archaeology ("I resuscitate the dead", he said in defining the discipline), visited the ruins. He made drawings and described the Naxian colossus of Apollo. It was a favorite subject in travelers' sketchbooks, such as the one kept by S. de Vries in 1673. In the 17th century, the Venetians removed it to their city, placing it at the entrance to the Arsenal of Venice where there still stands today one of the ancient marble lions of Naxos from the terrace of Lions. Other works were transported to Rome and to England. Delos had considerable influence on the development of architecture and monumental arts during the Greco-Roman period, such as seen in the immense Hellenistic sanctuary whose treasure of masterpieces has disappeared today. This influence was matched later by the important role it has played since the 15th century in furthering our knowledge of ancient Greek art from a widely renowned site.

- Criterion III. The island of Delos bears unique witness to the civilizations of the Aegean world in

the 3rd millennium B.C. (groundworks of prehistoric huts were discovered at the top of Mount Kynthos). During the Paleo-Christian era, it was the seat of the bishopric of the Cyclades which ruled over the islands of Mykonos, Syros, Seriphos, Kythnos and Keos. From the 7th century B.C. to the pillage by Athenodoros, the island of Delos was one of the principal Panhellenic sanctuaries. The feast of the Delians, which was celebrated every four years in the month of May until 316 B.C., included gymnastic, equestrian and musical competitions, strange Archaic Age dances, theatrical productions and banquets. Like the Olympic Games and the Pythic Games, it was one of the major events in the Greek world.

- Criterion IV. The archaeological site of Delos restores the image of an extremely important cosmopolitan Mediterranean port that began to prosper in 314 B.C., reaching outstanding levels during the 2nd and 1st centuries B.C. when the average population is estimated to have been 25,000. Warehouses and trading companies abounded, large residential areas were established, public buildings were founded by associations of bankers, traders and shipowners and were placed under the protection of Hermes (Hermaists), Apollo (Apolloniasts) and Poseidon (Poseidoniasts). Moreover, there was an unprecedented number of sanctuaries reserved for foreign religions: temples of Sarapis, Isis and Anubis, temples to the Syrian gods Haadad and Atargatis located on the flanks of Mount Kynthos, and even a synagogue in the stadium district. All this provides an outstanding example of an architectural ensemble that illustrates a significant historical period marked by the island's independence (316 B.C.), the second exile of the Delians (166 B.C.) and the fall of Corinth (146 B.C.) and which lasted until the troubles of the first century.

- Criterion VI. Delos is directly and materially associated with one of the principal myths of Hellenic civilisation. It was on this arid islet that Leto, made pregnant by Zeus and fleeing the vengeance of Hera, gave birth to Apollo and Artemis after a difficult labor. According to the Homeric hymn composed circa 700 B.C., the island which until then had been floating became anchored to the floor of the ocean. The newborn Phoebus- Apollo threw off his swaddling clothes, bathed the universe in light and began walking with his cithar and his bow. Kynthos, the mountain of Zeus, and the wheel-shaped lake close to which the pregnant Leto suffered labor pains for nine days and nights, remain essential landmarks of the island's sacred geography, which was clearly defined by the additions made to the Delian

sanctuary to Apollo between the 6th and the 1st centuries B.C.

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: change the name of the site

Boundaries and Buffer Zone

- Status of boundaries of the site: inadequate
- The archaeological site must be extended to encompass the complex of islands and include besides the islands of Delos and Rheneia the rocky islets that lie between them i.e. Lesser Rhematiari, Greater Rhematiari and Kounelonissi. Rheneia in its entirety has been designated an Archaeological Site and the group of islands has composed a unified complex since antiquity. At Rheneia, the cemetery is preserved along with many ancient facilities and the rocky islets contain ancient Sanctuaries. The site must also include the sea area around the complex of islands to a depth of 60 m
- No buffer zone has been defined, but is needed; for the time being there is an ongoing co-operation between the 21st EPCA and the Port Authorities for the surveillance of the sea area surrounding the archaeological site

Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- World Heritage site values have been maintained
- In 1991 the Greek State provided the necessary funds to bring electricity to the island that was of primary importance for the protection of Delos. Electrification assisted significantly in the residence and work of the staff employed in guarding and conservation of the monuments. Throughout the year antiquity guards, archaeologists, conservators, architects and technicians reside on the island and work to protect, conserve and enhance the monuments, with the result that the Archaeological Site is improving its image constantly. With constant conservation and support work the greater part of the archaeological site (approximately 7 hectares)

can now be visited. In 2005 the first stage of the Work "Drawing up and laying down the visitor route for the Archaeological Site of Delos, conservation/support of the monuments" funded by the Greek State and the Third Community Support Framework will be completed. The work underway is important and has altered the shape of the northern segment of the archaeological site. Concurrently, studies were prepared for the overall conservation, support, restoration and presentation of the major monuments

- In 2006 conservation-support work is scheduled on the central segment of the archaeological site, the area of the Sanctuary. The area of the Sanctuary is the most difficult area of the archaeological site, as many buildings have been excavated to levels deeper than their foundations, and the entire area is overrun with scattered architectural members. An educational visitor route is planned and the area will be provided with access for the disabled

3. Protection

Legislative and Administrative Arrangements

- The entire islands of Delos and Rheneia comprise an archaeological site and are protected in accordance with the provisions of Law 3028/2002, Government Gazette 153/A/28-6-2002 "On the Protection of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage in general"
- Significant changes: designating the island of Rheneia an archaeological site, passing Law 3028/2002, Government Gazette 153/A/28.6.2002 "On the Protection of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage in general"
- The protection arrangements are considered sufficiently effective

Actions taken/proposed:

- Increasing the guarding staff, creating a sub-station of the Port Authority to patrol the sea area and the port

4. Management

Use of site/property

- Paid visitor attraction, grazing land (the segments of the islands that are not excavated, where there are no surface monuments, belong to the Municipality of Myconians and are rented out)

Management /Administrative Body

- Steering group: the Delos Working Group, which was renamed the Committee for the Conservation of the Monuments of Delos, is comprised of specialized scientists who, with meetings and visits, plan, supervise and execute work programmes for the conservation, support, restoration of the monuments as well as for the presentation and protection of the archaeological site. Its mandate is to investigate issues of the conservation, support and restoration of the antiquities and it is legally constituted
- 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 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; 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 Delos, the 21st Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities is responsible for the management and protection of the monuments

6. Financial Resources

Financial situation

- The operation of the site is funded by the Greek State. Up to 2001 the conservation works were also funded by the Greek State. Since 2002, the Greek State and the 3rd Community Support Framework fund the works
- Sufficient funding for the protection and conservation of the site and for its adequate management

7. Staffing Levels

- Number of staff: 27

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

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

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

- There are training needs for education and training of guarding staff
- There is training available for stakeholders on the site

9. Visitor Management

- Visitor statistics: 85,840 visitors (tickets), 2004
- Visitor facilities: ticket booth, shop, WCs, signs throughout the Archaeological Site (metal signs with the plan of the Archaeological Site and with informative drawings and texts for individual monuments) and the Museum (with 11 halls open to the public) information leaflet with a short history of the site and with proposed visitor trails, a guidebook, paths for the disabled
- To assist visitors, along with their ticket they receive an information leaflet with a concise history of the site and proposed visitor trails. Metal signs with a plan of the Archaeological Site and signs with informative drawings and texts. Foreign language guidebooks. In the process of formulating a visitor trail. There is a route for the disabled, which will be soon completed

10. Scientific Studies

- Risk assessment; studies related to the value of the site; monitoring exercises; archaeological surveys; visitor management
- Research has been undertaken to investigate the structural materials of the ancient monuments, their origin and their pathology. There are also ongoing studies for the overall conservation-support-presentation of the specific monuments, which are being implemented following the approval of the competent bodies of the Ministry of Culture and under the supervision of the Special Services thereof. An extensive bibliography for the Monuments of Delos already exists and new

studies are constantly being added to this list both by Greek and by foreign investigators

- Before any conservation-restoration-support works is carried out on the monuments, a study is prepared, which is submitted for approval to the Central Archaeological Council. The studies and the experience of the last thirty years play a decisive role in the management of the Archaeological 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, local communities, businesses, local authorities
- There are regular guided tours, lectures held in conjunction with local cultural societies; educational programmes in collaboration with the schools of the surrounding islands; annual musical concert, with free entrance. A Union of Friends of Delos/Rheneia has been established
- Web site available
- Local participation: the Union of Friends of Delos/Rheneia has been established and greatly assists in the presentation and protection of the Monument and in making its values more widely known

12. Factors affecting the Property (State of Conservation)

Reactive monitoring reports

- World Heritage Bureau sessions: 16th (1992); 18th (1994)
- World Heritage Committee sessions: 16th (1992)

Conservation interventions

- Ancient monuments underwent conservation and support, tons of rubble from old excavations were removed, the ancient roads were revealed, roads and squares that had been excavated to a depth greater than the ancient road surface were re-covered, old excavation trenches were buried and flooring was placed in the interior of buildings. The northern area of the site, from the Sanctuary (Hieron) to the Museum, is now passable and comprehensible to visitors, while for the first time there is disabled access. Support was created for the later roofs of important

monuments: the House of the Trident, the House of the Masks, the House of Hermai. Studies were elaborated for the overall conservation, support, restoration and presentation of important monuments. The implementation of the studies for the conservation – support of House VI.N and Warehouses b, c is in progress

- Present state of conservation: good

Threats and Risks to site

- Environmental
- Specific issues: the major factors that affect the monuments of Delos are the strong north winds that dominate the central Aegean and its proximity to the sea
- Emergency measures taken: the problem encountered in the buildings is met with continuous conservation and support work. Fragile marble sculptures, such as the Naxian Lions, were transported to the Museum and have been replaced with exact replicas

13. Monitoring

- Formal monitoring programme: rainfall is monitored at the site and humidity is monitored inside the museum

14. Conclusions and Recommended Actions

- Main benefits of WH status: conservation, social, management
- The work of conserving the monuments and landscaping the Archaeological Site constantly highlights the values for which Delos was designated a World Heritage site. The Ministry of Culture directly monitors the condition of the monuments and constantly provides for their protection, conservation, support and presentation
- Weaknesses of management: in order to make the work of protecting Delos more effective, suitable funds must be ensured in order to maintain/increase the necessary personnel

Future actions:

- Providing funds for the required hiring of staff