

ITALY

I Sassi di Matera

Brief description

This is the most outstanding, intact example of a troglodyte settlement in the Mediterranean region, perfectly adapted to its terrain and ecosystem. The first inhabited zone dates from the Palaeolithic, while later settlements illustrate a number of significant stages in human history. Matera is in the southern region of Basilicata.

1. Introduction

Year(s) of Inscription

1993

Agency responsible for site management

- Municipality of Matera
Sassi Office
via Aldo Moro
75100 Matera
Basilicata, Italy
E-mail: ufficio.sassi@virgilio.it
Website: www.comune.mt.it

2. Statement of Significance

Inscription Criteria

C (iii), (iv), (v)

Justification provided by the State Party

Les Sassi di Matera et le parc archéologique et naturel de la civilisation rupestre de la Gravina représentent un témoignage unique de l'activité de l'homme. Conformément à l'esprit de la convention du Patrimoine Mondial, la valeur exceptionnelle dérive de la symbiose tout particulièrement importante des caractéristiques culturelles et naturelles. Ils répondent aux critères d'inscription concernant les sites d'une part, œuvres conjuguées de l'homme et de la nature qui offrent un témoignage unique d'une civilisation disparue (critère (iii)) et d'autre part, exemples éminents d'un habitat humain traditionnel représentatif d'une culture devenue vulnérable en raison des effets des mutations irréversibles (critère V). Les Sassi di Matera et le Parc archéologique et naturel de la civilisation rupestre de la Gravina offrent un itinéraire dans le temps à travers tous les âges de l'humanité et constituent le document architectonique d'une histoire unique: la capacité de créer un milieu adapté à la vie en gérant de

manière parcimonieuse et précise les ressources de la nature.

Les Sassi di Matera et le Parc archéologique et naturel de la civilisation rupestre de la Gravina répondent au critère d'authenticité aussi bien en ce qui concerne la conception que les matériaux utilisés. Ils sont protégés par la législation de l'Etat italien qui intéresse les centres historiques, par la loi spéciale pour les Sassi di Matera et par la loi Régionale pour le parc archéologique et naturel. Ces lois interdisent l'exploitation incontrôlée des sols, la surélévation, la démolition et la reconstruction des bâtiments dans les zones protégées ainsi que la transformation du tissu urbain. Des sanctions administratives et pénales ont été prévues pour tout sujet qui devrait enfreindre la loi selon la normative de l'Etat italien.

La gestion est confiée à la Ville de Matera munie d'un bureau expressément créé pour les Sassi. D'importantes associations de protection exercent leurs activités dans la ville de Matera, comme par exemple la Scaletta qui s'occupe des Sassi et des Eglises rupestres ou encore, la Lega ambiente (Ligue pour l'Environnement) qui protège les sites naturels.

As provided in ICOMOS/IUCN evaluation

Qualities: The I Sassi quarter of Matera is the best surviving and most complete example of continuity in the Mediterranean region of this type of settlement, which developed in close harmony with the ecosystem.

Additional comments [...] There also needs to be vigilance in respect of the growth of the buffer zone between I Sassi and the modern town of Matera, so as to avoid development that does not harmonize with the ancient quarters. [...]

Another problem that needs careful attention is tourism, which should be controlled in accordance with a visitor management plan so as to avoid the type of development which has ruined the ambience of Alberobello and its unique trulli.

Recommendation: That this property be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (iii), (iv), and (v):

Criterion (iii) Matera's I Sassi and park represent an outstanding example of a rock-cut settlement, adapted perfectly to its geomorphologic setting and its ecosystem and exhibiting continuity over more than two millennia.

Criterion (iv) The town and park constitute an outstanding example of an architectural ensemble

and landscape illustrating a number of significant stages in human history.

Criterion (v) The town and park represent an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement and land-use showing the evolution of a culture which has maintained over time a harmonious relationship with its natural environment.

Committee Decision

Bureau (June 1993): The Bureau reminded the competent Italian authorities that the on-going restoration and rehabilitation work at Matera should be in conformity with international standards of conservation (Venice Charter) and requested them to propose a shorter and more explicit name for this property.

Session (1993): The Committee inscribed the site on the World Heritage List under criteria (iii), (iv) and (v).

- Statement of significance adequately defines the outstanding universal value of the site
- Change proposed by State Party for the name of the site: I Sassi e il Parco delle Chiese Rupestri di Matera

Boundaries and Buffer Zone

- Status of boundaries of the site: adequate
- Buffer zone: adequate

Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- World Heritage site values have been maintained
- The work involved in the rehabilitation has certainly changed the visual perception of the whole complex without however modifying the substantial authenticity of the entire site

3. Protection

Legislative and Administrative Arrangements

- The whole site's area is protected by general Italian Laws enforceable throughout the national territory as well as laws specifically drawn up and exclusively enforceable on the site. As far as the zone of the Sassi Quarters is concerned, the enforceable law aims at the "preservation and architectonic, urban, environmental and economic restructuring of the Sassi Quarters of Matera and the protection of the overlooking Murgia Plateau". With regards to the Park, the enforceable Regional law for the "Establishment of the

archaeological, historical, natural park of Rock Churches". Legislative Decree "Cultural Heritage and Landscape code" is enforceable on all artistic, historical, archaeological and monumental heritage and on areas of landscape and natural interest on the site

- Over 60% of the real estate belonging to the Sassi Quarters is the property of the Italian Government and therefore protected by Legislative Decree. In 1998 the procedures to transfer these real estate in concession to the Local Government of Matera for 99 years was completed. The Municipality of Matera can also transfer them in concession through 30year agreements to private individuals and/or organisations and associations that request them and agree to bear the restoration expenses through the benefit of rent reduction. At the present about 30% of the state properties available have been transferred in sub-concession from the local government
- The protection arrangements are considered sufficiently effective

Actions taken/proposed:

- Declaration of Cultural interest, which identifies all the buildings of which the same regulation is enforceable on all state properties

4. Management

Use of site/property

- Visitor attraction, urban centre, religious use, rural landscape, regional park
- Entrance fee only with regard to some historical monumental complexes of remarkable importance

Management /Administrative Body

- Steering group: during the drawing up of the management plan a coordinating core will be established to direct the development of the site
- Management under protective legislation; under traditional protective measures or customary law; consensual management
- Levels of public authority who are primarily involved with the management of the site: national; regional; local
- The current management system is sufficiently effective

Actions proposed:

- Improving promotion and communication

5. Management Plan

- Management plan is being implemented; Implementation commenced: 12/1988
- Currently revised: 12/2005
- The conservation and rehabilitation works in the Sassi Quarters are regulated by the “biennial programmes of implementation” established under Law. It is to be expected that an “Action Plan” for the entire site will be drawn up on the basis of the UNESCO’s guidelines and MiBAC’s methods
- Management Plan to be completed and adopted: 12/2006
- Adequate
- Responsibility for over-seeing the implementation of the management plan and monitoring its effectiveness: The Biennial Programmes and the General Restructure Plan have been developed by the Sassi Office with the professional advice of external consultants; the Plan for the Park has been developed by the Technical Office of the park’s managing body

6. Financial Resources

Financial situation

- State Budget
- European Community funding
- Insufficient

7. Staffing Levels

- Number of staff: 24

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

- Very good: conservation, management, promotion, interpretation, education, visitor management
- The Sassi office as foreseen by Law is above all a “town planning – architectonic – building office” that manages the administrative tasks involved in upgrading the real estate and urban areas in the Sassi quarters; there is a shortage of experts in promotion and communication and for all the managerial activities concerning the tourist – economic enhancement of the site. With reference to the park’s area there are some professionals specialised in the tourism sector as well as cultural development and enhancement, but the number of operators is completely insufficient

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

- Post-degree School of specialisation in archaeology; degree course in “Operator of Cultural Heritage” at the Arts and Philosophy faculty of the University of Basilicata. Museums; Soprintendenze (Superintendence) of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities; “Zetema” foundation for the study, research and enhancement and management of historical and environmental heritage
- Training needs: it would be opportune to train skilled personnel specialised in territorial information systems (g.i.s.) to proceed towards a more efficient and flexible management of the volume of the data concerning the knowledge and management of the site’s territory
- Training available for stakeholders

9. Visitor Management

- Visitor statistics: 200.000 (approximate estimate based on the information gathered by the authorised tourist guides who operate in the Sassi Quarters and in the Park’s area), 2004
- Visitor facilities: parking space for cars and campers, information desks in close proximity to the access areas of the site; there is a tourist route to visit the main rock Churches belonging to the Sassi Quarters’ area; the fully operational services provided in the site’s area include: 50 tourist guides; 7 excursion guides; 20 tourist interpreters; 2 tour leaders; 20 specialised guides for the park area. All the staff has achieved the relevant licence that qualifies them as tourist guides and thus to be registered in the Region’s List of tourist guides established by regional law; in the site’s district there are fully operational private and public hotels, catering services and public toilets. Various guidelines edited in Italian and other foreign languages. The body managing the Rock Church Park promotes its activities and territorial resources through a web site. (<http://www.parcomurgia.it/>)
- Visitor needs: Close to the main access for the Sassi Quarters a highly specialised area is developing to promote and provide information about the site. Procedures to extend urban tourist routes to the entire site’s heritage and to establish a visitor’s centre for the regional Park in the Sassi quarters that may become an information and promotional workstation for the cultural heritage involved in it. In establishment

phase is a Centre for the documentation regarding the rock habitat. According to relevant planning, the transport system in the Sassi quarters will be improved as well as the connections that will be extended to other visitor centres currently in development within the Park's area

10. Scientific Studies

- Risk assessment; studies related to the value of the site; monitoring exercises; conditions surveys; archaeological surveys; register of cultural heritage; plan for cultural system framework; monographic surveys of the fauna and flora in the park's territory
- A charter concerning natural (geological and seismic) risks in the Sassi quarter has been drawn up and commissioned by the Municipality of Matera to the geological department of the University of Basilicata. - Many publications have taken an interest in the characteristics ascribable to the value of the site.

A Code of Practice has been drawn up to analyse the static-structural characteristics of the buildings and the compatible measures necessary to hold back and consolidate the upheaval phenomena.

Among other documents that have been drawn up, there are the manuals for the stylistic – architectonic renewal of buildings and for the disciplinary codes for street layout. The monitoring activities are regularly carried out by defining the “stage of realisation” Law and gradually verifying the appropriateness of the progress made during the renewal and preservation works.

Surveys and hypothesis on the regulation of vehicle traffic in the Sassi quarters' area have been carried out also taking into consideration the flow of vehicles used to renew the buildings. Register of cultural heritage.

Plan for the Cultural systems framework of the municipal territory which establishes the strategies based on actions coming from knowledge-protection-enhancement in order to incorporate the territorial identity into the current development processes and orientate them towards sustainability criteria.

Monographic surveys on the Park's territory represent the preliminary studies on which the preparation of the Plan for the Rock Church Park framework of Matera is based

Each of these studies conducted has been adopted by the Local Government as reference

material for the actions related to the fulfilment of purposes foreseen by Laws. The insertion of the site in the WHL has certainly stimulated the realisation of the above mentioned studies even further and has now veered more towards protection and preservation actions

11. Education, Information and Awareness Building

- An adequate number of signs referring to World Heritage site
- World Heritage Convention Emblem used on publications
- Adequate awareness of World Heritage among: visitors, local communities, businesses, local authorities
- In the Park area there is an environmental Educational Centre run by external organisations. The activity of the Park's Environmental Educational Centre mainly concerns the awakening of the scholarships in protection and environmental enhancement
- A national seminar was held in May 2005 for Italian Managers of UNESCO's sites to present the final version of the methodology needed to draw up Management Plans. Over 2005 a national convention will be held to talk about the UNESCO's sites within the framework of the actions estimated by the agreement with two nearby sites at Alberobello and Castel del Monte
- A recent agreement with the nearby cities of Adria (Castel del Monte) and Alberobello that are also UNESCO sites promotes the joint enhancement for tourist and cultural purposes through promotional and territorial marketing initiatives based on the common ground of belonging to the W.H.C. These actions also envisage the use of coordinated communication procedures and a common “brand name” to the three sites that makes them immediately recognisable
- Web site available
- Local participation

12. Factors affecting the Property (State of Conservation)

Reactive monitoring reports

- N/A

Conservation interventions

- In the Sassi quarters: the renewal and re-qualification actions of private and public buildings for residential use and/or for

innovative services always compatible with the site's value, re-qualification of the pedestrian and vehicle areas and primary urban network. Restoration of historical-monumental-religious buildings for public use, visits, exhibitions and the organisation of cultural events

- In the park's area: restoration of various rock churches with their insertion into the main tourist routes; restoration of a farm and a Jazzo (sheepfold in the Murgia) as a visitor centre and for environmental education purposes
- Present state of conservation: Good

Threats and Risks to site

- Environmental pressure
- Specific issues: In the Parks's area there are many agricultural and farming enterprises and two industrial factories for the production of cement and concrete which involve environmental and economical risks. The residential and tourist load wear is considerable for protection and preservation purposes. The entire site's area is classified as subject to low seismic risks. (Seismic degree equal to level 3). No further particular factors of upheaval are counted
- Emergency measures taken: Monitoring activities on the territory; delocalisation of the implantation of concrete production; negotiations with the company owning the concrete-mixing implantation are under way to verify the possibility to move it to an industrial area far from the Park; the Park organisation is negotiating to delocalise the concrete-mixing implantation

13. Monitoring

- No formal monitoring programme
- Measures taken/planned: key indicators for the monitoring activities of the site will be defined during the editing phase of the management plan

14. Conclusions and Recommended Actions

- Main benefits of WH status: conservation; social; economic
- Strengths/Weaknesses of management: the lack of financial resources to complete the restructuring actions and the subsequent maintenances necessary to ensure continuity in protecting, defending and preserving the existing characteristics and heritage. A greater capacity to promote and enhance the site's

area for tourist and cultural purposes may determine the implementation of a virtuous course of economical self-sustenance and compatible development

Future actions:

- Drawing up of the Management Plan of the Site. All administrations currently committed to the management of the site. Timeframe: by the end of 2006