



Executive Summary

State Party

Spain

State, Province or Region

Autonomous Community of the Canary Islands, Gran Canaria island.

Geographical Region: Africa

Biogeographic region: Macaronesia

Name of Property

Risco Caído and the Sacred Mountains of Gran Canaria Cultural Landscape

Geographical coordinates to the nearest second

Name	Municipality	Coordinates
Geographical center of nominated property	Caldera de Tejeda	27° 59' 7.723" N / 15° 38' 15.168" O
Risco Caído Almogaren	Artenara	28° 2' 37.860" N / 15° 39' 40.572" O
Risco Chapín Sanctuary	Artenara / Tejeda	28° 1' 3.129" N / 15° 38' 2.437" O
Mesa de Acusa	Artenara	0' 35.423" N / 15° 40' 40.935" O
Sierra del Bentayga	Tejeda	27° 59' 7.723" N / 15° 38' 15.168" O

Textual description of the limits of the proposed property

The proposed property is in the mountainous heart of Gran Canaria, encompassing the entire Cuenca de Tejeda, including its escarpments and cliffs, the Tamadaba Highlands and the course and slopes of Barranco Hondo. The entire property proposed and the buffer zone are part of the Caldera de Tejeda, which comprises the scenic and natural boundary of the nominated property, the geographic and symbolic centre of which is Roque Bentayga.

A4 Size Map of the nominated property, showing boundaries and buffer zone

See the next pages for the maps of the scope of the nominated property and buffer zone

Map 1. General

Area of the nominated property and buffer zone, including the names of the most representative attributes and important geographical areas.

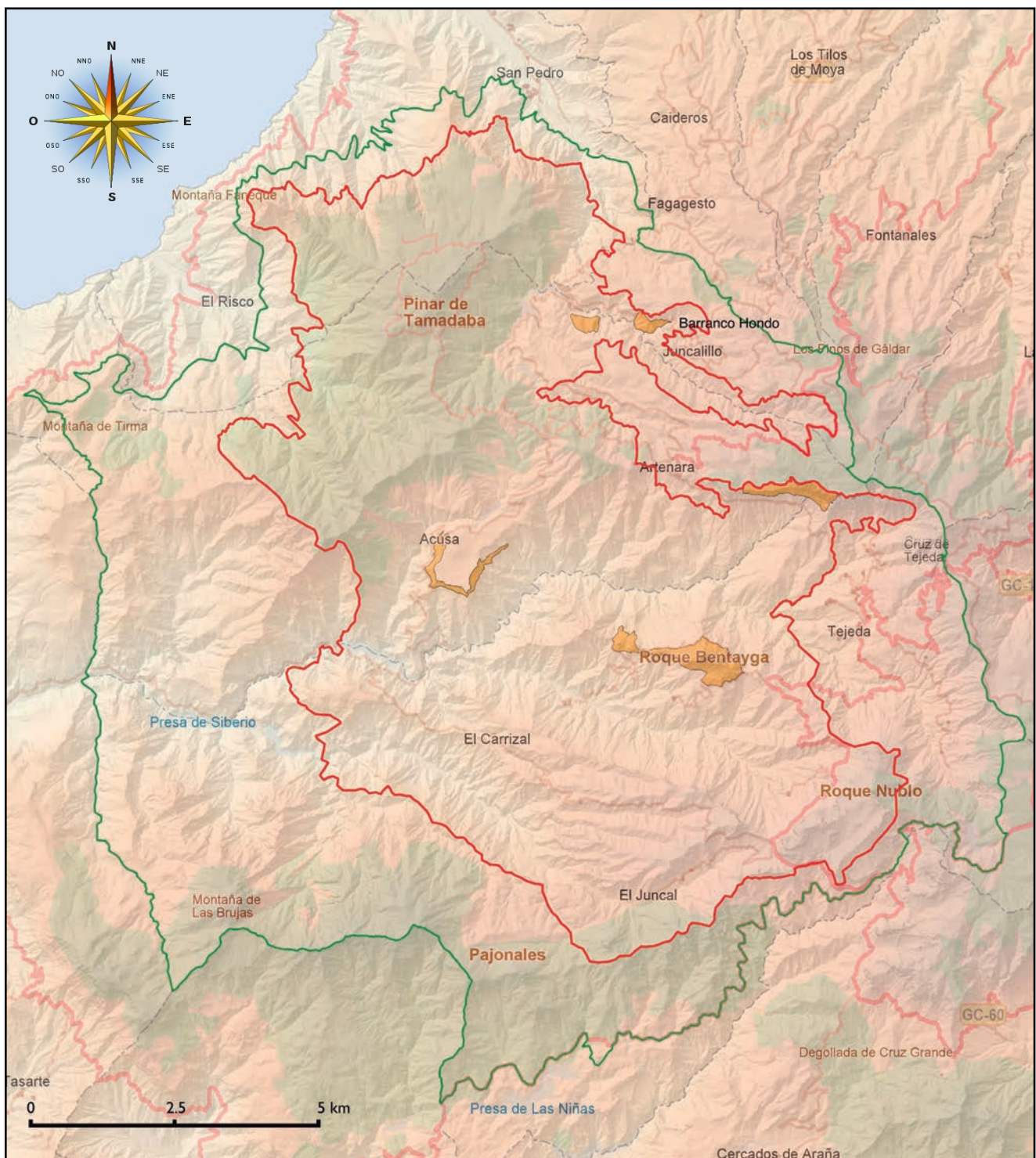
Map 2. Zoning, place names and population centres.

Area of the nominated property and population centres, including the place names of scattered settlements of population.

Criteria under which property is nominated

The Risco Caído and the Sacred Mountains of Gran Canaria meets inscription criteria (iii) and (v)

I. Map of the nominated property, showing boundaries and buffer zone



Description:

Area of the nominated property and the buffer zone. The most interesting troglodyte areas are highlighted.

Base map:

Digital Terrain Model (DTM) over shaded map.
Source: Grafcan. Canary Island Regional Information System.
Canary Island Government.

Legend

- Main troglodyte settlements
- Nominated property boundaries
- Buffer zone boundaries

Spatial reference system:

UTM projection
EPSG:32628 - WGS 84 / UTM zone 28N

2. Map of the nominated property, showing boundaries and buffer zone



Description:

Area of the nominated property and rural settlements.
(D) = scattered

Legend

- Rural settlements
- Nominated property boundaries
- Buffer zone boundaries

Base map:

Digital Terrain Model (DTM) over shaded map.
Source: Grafcan. Canary Island Regional Information System.
Canary Island Government.

Spatial reference system:

UTM projection
EPSG:32628 - WGS 84 / UTM zone 28N

Draft Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

a) Brief synthesis

The Cultural Landscape of Risco Caído and the Sacred Mountains of Gran Canaria covers an extensive mountainous area of the centre of the island of Gran Canaria, delimited by the spectacular Caldera de Tejeda, encompassing much of the basin, course and slopes of Barranco Hondo and the forested highlands of Tamadaba. The terrain is extremely rugged, with imposing crags, cliffs, deep ravines and monumental volcanic formations, all in an area of extreme biodiversity.

The nominated property harbours a set of well-conserved, mainly archaeological manifestations and works belonging to an extinct island culture that evolved in total isolation from the presence, at least in the year 0 A.D., after the first North African Berbers or Imazighen had reached these shores, until the Spanish conquered the island in the 15th century. Thus, it is an exceptional cultural evolution in an oceanic island space that grew from the background, knowledge and beliefs of the first Berber settlers (Imazighen), finally generating a unique and distinct island culture in this territory.

A cosmological vision encompassing both the skyscape and the landscape provided the means of organising and understanding the space of the sacred mountains of Gran Canaria. Outstanding human troglodyte settlements and rock art sanctuaries are arranged here, along with farming structures surprisingly-well adapted to the unique geology and nature, giving rise to a cultural landscape that still conserves most of its original elements together with the visual relationships between them. The Cultural Landscape offers a clear and outstanding example of how mankind adapts to a complex and difficult natural environment, representing a paradigmatic model in the island context.

Certain material expressions of the indigenous inhabitants of this territory, especially the temples or *almogarenes* with obvious astronomical connections, are surprisingly complex and the outstanding constructive conception is incredible; the more so if we consider that this was a culture that did not even use metal. Another rarity is that the area contains one of the largest concentrations of pubic triangle engravings, an ancestral symbol of fertility, known in the world.

The way the settlements are laid out, the presence of temples and markers with clear astronomical connotations, and certain reference landmarks, along with certain calendrical reference points, reveal a complex landscape inter-

connected with the sky. The evolving cultural landscape of the sacred mountains includes both the earth and the skyscape, inextricably combined.

The aboriginal mark has survived through time and space here, moulding the landscape, maintaining the troglodyte culture throughout the area and conserving ancestral practices such as transhumance, the unique terraced fields for growing crops, and methods of managing water and cave pools. In general terms, this is a heritage whose roots are sunk deep into the original culture, as is evident from the extant Libyco-Berber engravings. It can be considered the westernmost expression of the Amazigh culture, which, for the first time, develops into another, unique island culture.

The Cultural Landscape of Risco Caído and the Sacred Mountains of Gran Canaria is a genuine laboratory of knowledge that illustrates the adventure of the aboriginal island cultures of the planet, which have evolved over long periods of time without any external influence, giving rise to their own cosmology and a distinctive universe of knowledge and beliefs. Thus, it is an outstanding heritage that expresses a unique and unrepeatable cultural process displayed on a stage that has remained almost unaltered over the centuries.

b) Justification for Criteria

Criterion (iii)

(Bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilisation which is living or which has disappeared)

The set of archaeological sites and rock art manifestations bears unique and exceptional testimony to an extinct island culture that evolved in isolation for over one thousand five hundred years. Archaeological and historical evidence from the nominated property bears witness to the fact that this culture arose from the first settlers that came from the Berber Maghreb, which in of itself makes it exceptional, as it is a unique case of an island culture that can trace its roots back to the pre-Islamic Amazigh world, of which there are very few manifestations. This place also represents the sacred mountains that were the final refuge of the ancient Canarians before the Spanish conquest.

The site expresses a very strong and highly original relationship of human beings with nature (both land and sky). The nominated property provides exceptional testimony of an island culture that includes the skyscape as a fundamental part of the perception of their world, rites and beliefs. They also developed an astronomical culture closely attuned and related to the natural environment and the surrounding landscape. Evidence of this is provided by the

temples with strong astronomical connections, such as the almogaren at Roque Bentayga and the cave at Risco Caído, that represent the pinnacle of the evolution of these manifestations.

This heritage legacy also illustrates the odyssey of the aboriginal island cultures of the planet that have evolved over long periods of time without any external influences, giving rise to their own cosmology and a unique universe of know-how and beliefs.

Criterion (v):

(Be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment, especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change)

The aboriginal troglodyte settlements of the Caldera de Tejeda and the surrounding area are an unrepeatable example of this kind of human habitat in ancient island cultures, illustrating a highly efficient and complex level of organisation of the space and adaptive resource management. The colossal geological stage and the natural landscapes blend in with the cave settlements, sanctuaries, agricultural works and terraces, to develop a genuine cultural landscape that still maintains its main references and its symbolic and cosmological connotations.

The troglodyte habitat has been kept alive as a way of life over time, creating new ways of occupying the space that express the syncretism between the aboriginal culture and the culture introduced after the conquest. There is also the survival of ancestral techniques and land uses, such as transhumance and water management with unique troglodyte traits such as the cave pools.

The orientation and alignment of certain temples and caves also indicates an intimate relationship between settlements of this kind and the skyscape and the main symbolic elements of the landscape.

The spatial distribution of the settlements and the findings from the sites offer a detailed understanding of how the aboriginal communities exploited the territory of the sacred mountains. The current environment contains habitats and species of flora and fauna that also cast light on the lifestyle of the ancient settlers. Our knowledge of the skills and cultural traditions of the aboriginal people, and the survival of many of these skills and traditions, allows us to recognise a territorial culture that was intelligently adapted to a difficult and complex territory and that generates an incomparable cultural landscape.

c) Statement of Integrity

The whole of the designated property does not only include all the necessary components and elements to express the Outstanding Universal Value in terms of a cultural landscape, sacred for the ancestral settlers of the island, it also has the right size and adequate boundaries to fully represent the attributes and processes that transmit the importance of the property.

With respect to the integrity of the composition of the landscape, the area of the nominated property houses the greatest density of troglodyte manifestations on the island of Gran Canaria, exhibiting a unique phenomenon in the islands, with almost one thousand artificial caves of different kinds, from well-conserved, original aboriginal villages, to caves reused in historic times. It also includes an important representation of temples, or almogarenes, of different characteristics, which include sanctuaries both in caves and outdoors.

The Cultural Landscape clearly maintains the integrity of its relations. Delimitation of the space of the property by the Caldera and Tejeda Basin (geological and geographical factors that determine the property) is very visible and coherent. It has a series of visual qualities: spectacular and monumental physical features, sacred forests, human troglodyte settlements on the cliffs and peaks, agricultural settlement by the use of terraces combined with the troglodyte settlements and traces of the paths of the ancient Canarians, among other important manifestations. Relationships between attributes and components of different kinds are highly visible, with many viewing points for visitors. Human use of geographical and astronomical alignments is especially readable in their relationship with the human artefacts

The wholeness of the property and its visual expression made an exceptional, complete and very harmonious cultural landscape, showing the last mountain refuge of the Canarian Imazighen. This landscape offers an exceptional combination of aesthetic features arising from geology, geography, biodiversity and human physical settlement. It also bears witness to scientific and symbolic practices concerning the sky in relation to human beings and understanding nature.

d) Statement of authenticity

The authenticity of the nominated property's attributes can be seen particularly in the almogarenes or sanctuaries, the common granaries and the multiple manifestations of original troglodyte habitat that conserve their original forms and content almost unchanged, particularly the ones

with rock art (engravings, paintings, Libyco-Berber alphabetic inscriptions), which include the extraordinary collection of pubic triangles. The relationship between these manifestations and the Amazigh culture is confirmed by archaeological and ethnographic evidence. The authenticity of the ceremonial or ritual use of the sanctuaries has also been confirmed by the results of the archaeological research, the excavations and the rock art studies, along with the clear references provided by the chronicles of the Spanish conquest of the island.

Archaeoastronomical research has provided sufficient evidence about the sanctuaries with astronomical connections to enable us to deduce that they were used as equinox and solstice markers.

The location and setting of the main troglodyte sites and the manifestations of rock art have remained without any significant change for over 500 years after the conquest, maintaining their original structure and location. Even the layout of the herding trails for nomadic grazing and the old access tracks to the temples, the continued survival of cave tanks/ponds and the siting of the old refuges have all been maintained through time and space.

In terms of intangible heritage, the relationship with the sky follows the same patterns as it did with the ancients, as the ethnographic studies reveal. Even certain festive traditions have maintained much of the essence of the original ones, even taking into consideration the processes of assimilation of the new culture and the passing of the years.

In these conditions, the main scenic elements of the cultural landscape and the skyscape, including the night sky, remain practically unaltered since the Spanish conquest in the 15th century, maintaining the essence of the landscape and the skyscape perceived by the ancient Canarians.

e) Requirements for protection and management

The necessary protection requirements for safeguarding the nominated property are guaranteed in the long term by virtue of the legal and planning provisions that affect both the area and its attributes. A raft of natural and cultural protection provisions converges on the nominated property to guarantee the integral protection of the landscape and the set of cultural attributes it contains, in the short and medium term.

Most of the area delimited for the nominated property and its buffer zone is covered by some of the protection provisions of the Canary Island Network of Protected Natural Areas, which clearly arbitrate the management criteria for the space with regard to uses, criteria and conservation, and they identify the natural, scenic and cultural proper-

ties that are protected. Moreover, the entire protection zone has been listed as a SPA (Special Protection Area) by virtue of the EU Habitats Directive and Birds Directive, by including them in the Natura 2000 Network, which is an extremely important guarantee of protection.

With regard to the cultural heritage, the main attributes of the nominated property have been listed as BICs (Properties of Cultural Interest), giving them maximum protection status in both national legislation and in Canary Island regional legislation. Furthermore, all the rock art manifestations have been automatically listed as BICs, since the Spanish Historical Heritage Act and the corresponding Regional Canary Island Historical Heritage Act have come onto the statute books.

The Cabildo of Gran Canaria is directly responsible for and is the competent authority for managing the main attributes and components of the cultural landscape by virtue of the devolved powers it holds, especially for cultural heritage, the environment and regional planning. It has the means and the human and financial resources to address this task. Nevertheless, bearing in mind the new challenges and objectives entailed in the nomination, such as enhancing grass-roots participation in the management process or the need to provide an holistic vision of managing the property that includes all the entities and departments concerned, the "Risco Caído and the sacred mountains of Gran Canaria Cultural Landscape Steering Committee" was set up at the end of 2015 as the body to provide permanent co-ordination of the management and the intervention/action strategy of the nominated property.

One of the Steering Committee's leading contributions has been to draw up the "Integrated Management Plan for the Risco Caído and the sacred mountains of Gran Canaria Cultural Landscape", which provides the management guidelines for the nominated property, which are revised periodically. The management and governance organisational chart of the nominated property is completed with the "Risco Caído and the sacred mountains of Gran Canaria Foundation", which is currently in the process of being set up.

Name and contact information of official local institution/agency

Organization:

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